ANNIE BESANT: AS WOMAN AND AS LEADER

DR. ANNIE BESANT

ANNIE BESANT: AS WOMAN AND AS LEADER

★

Reminiscences of
SRI PRAKASA

B.A., LL.B. (Cantab.), Barrister-at-Law,
M.L.A. (Central)
as child, boy, youth and man

★

1941

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Dedicated

to Her

whose memory it lovingly and respectfully

recalls and records

AND

to my Father

her friend and colleague

in her work for Theosophy and for India

because of whom such memory

was made possible

Foreword

IT gives me very great pleasure to write a little introduction to a most valuable appreciation of my beloved and revered teacher Dr. Annie Besant, by a very old friend of mine, Sri Prakasa—once indeed a most worthy pupil very obviously destined to reach his present eminence.

He has contributed what I can only call a precious study of some of the most vital years in the life of one of India's greatest servants and devotees, for, during the period of which he writes, Dr. Besant was not only hard at work building and equipping a great national altar at which the youth of India might worship the very soul of the Motherland and receive in blessing the gift of a truly Indian citizenship, rich in religion, rich in patriotism, rich in practical efficiency for honourable livelihood and useful service, she was also preparing for that wonderful future which was to see in her the foremost political worker for India's freedom and regeneration.

Sri Prakasa is specially fitted to paint the splendid picture of this period, for he is the son of one of the greatest and most learned men of today, Dr. Bhagavan Das, who was during the whole of Dr. Besant's life in India one of her most beloved friends and trusted colleagues. Dr. Bhagavan Das contributed very much to her preparation for her Indian work, and with his wife and every member of his family gave her an Indian home in which she felt herself to be an Indian and was ever surrounded by that warmth which only an Indian home can give.

At Benares Dr. Besant was Indian more than in any other place. She was happy in Benares, I think, as nowhere else, not even at Adyar, the southern Indian home she loved so dearly. At Benares she was just herself in all the intimate age-old nature of her being, and that this was so was in large measure due, apart from the ecstasy she ever felt in living in holy Kashi, to two great and noble families—the family of Dr. Bhagavan Das and the family of Sri Upendranath Basu, another most stalwart colleague and loved friend with his splendid brothers and children.

In this book there is painted with loving care and most happy memories a picture of Dr. Besant as she lived on one of the greater heights of her recent incarnation—one of the most cherished summits of

her nobly catastrophic life, and to which her thoughts so often turned as she lay dying at Adyar. And I do not hesitate to say that among the many biographies of her which will in due course appear, this fine sketch will rank not only among the most illuminating but also among the biographies which must be read if the life and work of Dr. Besant is to be rightly understood.

For my own part, having been privileged to live near to her during the most of the period described, I can most truly say that I have read Sri Prakasa's book with both joy and profit. I am grateful to him for entrusting its publication to The Theosophical Publishing House, which was one of her most cherished activities while she was President of The Theosophical Society, and I most sincerely hope that there will be very many to read it, to learn about a great period in the history of India's renaissance, and to feel inspired to give to their Mighty Motherland something of that extraordinary devotion which Dr. Besant gave to India—ever striving for her, suffering for her, dying for her, but ever supremely happy in her service.

George S. Arundale

Introduction

IT has been my desire ever since the passing away of Mrs. Besant to write my reminiscences of her. The desire became stronger each time I was asked to address meetings held in honour of her memory. Whenever I spoke to friends of this wish of mine, I invariably received their support. Mr. Arundale was almost enthusiastic in his reply when I wrote to him about it. My father felt that it would be very right and proper, would indeed be fulfilling a pressing duty, for an Indian of my generation to pay her a fitting tribute before it was too late.

A busy politician's life unfortunately is not very conducive to literary work: he has to deal with so many small items of business requiring immediate attention all the time, that he has but little energy left when he has done with his day's labour. Active politics, however, are responsible more than anything else, for my thinking more and more of Mrs. Besant of late, specially of her qualities of leadership, because

of the prevailing confusion, as I view it, in the leadership of the land today. I therefore started writing my reminiscences at long last, about the middle of July this year.

The memory cells worked rapidly and sympathetically, and my first draft was ready in less than a fortnight's time. I found to my surprise that the volume was almost four times as big as I had originally thought it would be. I have been used to writing articles for newspapers and magazines almost all my life, but this is my first attempt at compiling what can even distantly be called a book. Memories crowded round so thick and fast that it was difficult to pick and choose. It has thus taken me more than a month to revise my original draft and put it in some sort of order. I am very doubtful, however, whether I have been at all successful in doing justice to my subject, and I ask for my kind reader's indulgence at my shortcomings.

I have discussed men and affairs rather freely. Mrs. Besant's work was so all-embracing, and she simultaneously played such important parts in so many fields of activity and left her impress on so many spheres of life, that a careful study of her could easily put one in touch with most of the problems of human existence. Politics and politicians, religion and

religious preachers, sociology and social reformers, education and educationists, science and scientists, theology and theologians, have all come pell mell in these reminiscences, and I have not hesitated to give my own opinions on all these without any mental reservations. Household servants, food, clothing, manners and customs of many lands have all entered freely in my narrative. I can only hope I have been just in my estimates and fair in my appraisement of values. Anxious that my readers should understand all the matters I have dealt with and know all the persons I have discussed, I have added a large number of notes at the end of the book which I hope will be found useful and informing. The numbers of the notes tally with those marked at the relevant places in the body of the book. The narrative is really complete without the notes ; but if any information should be wanted by any reader about any person or, to him, any out-of-the-way word or idea mentioned in the book, I believe the notes will help him.

I am deeply grateful to The Theosophical Publishing House for so generously and spontaneously undertaking the publication of the book despite the serious financial risks involved in such grievous and uncertain times.

I should like to express my grateful thanks to Mr. J. L. Davidge of the Press Department of The Theosophical Society for the meticulous care with which he was good enough to read the manuscript, correct the proofs and see the book safely through the Press.

I am also particularly beholden to Dr. Arundale for kindly writing a foreword to this book and thus giving it the best introduction to the world that I can think of.

I must confess to a feeling of embarrassment as I send this book out into the world. I have discussed a great personality, and I am aware that many things I have said are liab.e to cause misunderstanding. I pray that my readers will pardon me if aught I say anywhere causes the least pain to anyone. I earnestly hope that this book will help many a person who knew Mrs. Besant to revive his memories of her, and enable others who did not know her to understand her, to learn from her, and try to act like her in his own sphere of work, high or humble. I also fervently pray that among many other things, this may also help to keep her memory green in a world so full of rushing and tremendous events, particularly at the time I am writing, that even the greatest are liable to be forgotten, no sooner than they are removed from

the world's sight by death. Mrs. Besant should live in the hearts of men and women all the world over for more than one reason. I pray that she may : I believe that she will.

SRI PRAKASA

SEVASHRAMA,
Benares,
September 10, 1940.

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ADDENDA

Frontispiece : See page 59

Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
15	6	they were	were
15	25	when	where
42	2	Delete "(see page 26)"	
59	14	left	right
59	15	right	left
59	16	left	right
79	22	after	from
110	8	Delete " so "	
138	1	Lode	Lodge
141	24	The Society	the College
147	29	Being	Beings
155	23	but	and
163	14	pourparlers, they	pourparlers. They
179	13	free	true
186	15	1939	1937
186	17	*after* "adorable"	*add* 'or "trustworthy"'
188	16	of	in
195	5	or	and
203	13	language	languages
203	15-16	literature. In Hindu philosophy Sanskrit is famous	literature for which Sanskrit is particularly famous

Page	Line	For	Read
216	7	us	as
226	11-12	after "Sri Prakasa" add diacritical strokes on both S."	
227	5	educator	collector
231	10	parliament	the Assembly
234	34	after 'Malaviyaji' add: "The public have given him the affectionate title of 'Mahamana', the 'high-minded'.	
241	16	32	38
243	12	were	are
248	21-22	that year	1939
248	30	Muhammad	Maulana Shaukat
250	30	Montagu	Mr. Montagu

ANNIE BESANT: AS WOMAN AND AS LEADER

MY earliest memories of *Bari Mem Saheb* ('the big European lady'; 'the Great Madame'; or 'the Grand old lady')—as Mrs. Besant[1] was always known and as she is still remembered in Benares—are of a lovable, loving, attractive, white lady—white from head to foot—with white hair, white clothes, white stockings and shoes[2]. I cannot remember what my age was when first I saw her. I remember this, however, that long afterwards introducing me to some friends she said: "I have known him since he was this high", putting her right hand, palm downwards. contiguous to her knee. Mrs. Besant was not a tall woman, and her knee could not have been very high from the ground. If I was only as high as her knee when I was privileged to see her for the first time, it must have been almost immediately after her coming to India. This is further proved by the fact that in the formal certificate I got from her in 1910, before going to England[3], she said: "I have known him for sixteen years". She had come out to India in 1894 and I was born in 1890. Even as a boy of four, I think I must have been taller than what she indicated. Anyway, I had my

revenge, for not very many years later I was much taller than she !

My memories, however, of her, as of most things, are very clear since my age of seven or eight. In fact I remember most of the dates and incidents since then. These memories centre most vividly round her frequent visits to our home, the most welcome being the one she paid on her return from foreign lands. She went away practically every year ; and when she returned, she invariably came to us for a midday meal and brought a large box full of toys. We were a very large Hindu family [4], my father, Dr. Bhagavan Das [5], and his three brothers, Messrs. Govind Das [6], Radha Charan Sah [7] and Sita Ram Sah [8], occupying different blocks in the same 'compound' [9]. When Mrs. Besant came, all the four sub-families gathered at one place for this great day. Everyone was astir ; all the children were properly dressed ; the best foods were cooked, of which Mrs. Besant ate precious little. It was only when I went with her to England and saw her eating better and with more relish than I could there, I realised how tastes differ, and how food is a matter of habit, and how we never get accustomed to strange foods even if we do to the climate, however much we may try. I also remember how the silver of the house used to be taken out for the occasion. Let me say quite candidly that it was not done so much to match the whiteness of the lady as to satisfy certain orthodox old-world notions of the ladies of the family, that gold and silver were not "defiled" even if "aliens" ate out of them, while the common metal of daily use became "impure" by their touch. Gold and silver are supposed to be much

purer than other metals ; and very wealthy and very orthodox Hindus—we were neither—particularly in South India, always have these even for their daily use [10].

REGARD FOR HINDU CUSTOMS

Those who know Hindu society—now fast changing in the upper strata, though more or less stationary in the rest—will not wonder. Orthodoxy in Hinduism [11], on the outside, apparent to all, stands confined almost solely to food and touch of food. There are very strict rules and conventions about marriage also ; but those about food are so much on the surface that they would strike even the veriest newcomer. However strong may be the affection that binds two persons, if they are not on such caste footing that they can dine with each other, aloofness in food is strictly observed. It is amusing that in Hindu India, love and affection do not depend upon willingness to dine together ; they subsist even when the closest of friends would decline to eat with each other ; and till lately nobody thought that there was any harm in this ; nobody suspected the least trace of pride or arrogance in it. Mrs. Besant was one of those rare individuals who understood the customs of another almost instinctively, and took no offence where none was meant.

I remember once my father was leading her up the steps of the marble Saraswati [12] temple, in the Central Hindu College [13] compound, gifted by the Maharani of Majhauli, a large landed estate in the Gorakhpur district, who had herself within tents, in strict *parda*,[14] laid the foundation stone of

that temple with proper ceremonials, of which I have vivid memory, though I could not have been very old at the time. Mrs. Besant stopped after a few steps, knowing that a non-Hindu could not go inside a Hindu temple even though this temple was in the compound of the College which she herself had founded. My father tried almost to push her along, saying it was all right and that she was perfectly entitled to go in. If I remember aright, she mounted one or two more steps, perhaps to please him, but really did not go right up to the temple, and placed her offering at a little distance from the image. [15]

GIFTS TO CHILDREN

Well, so in our family, the mothers were still orthodox, and food was served to all on that day in silver, in order presumably that the difference should not be known; and ordinarily the presence of silver would always give a guest the idea that special honour was being paid to him rather than that any caste restrictions were being observed. The boys and the girls of the family served the food out in plenty, rushing between the diners and the kitchen, having taken their own food beforehand. They insisted on filling Mrs. Besant's plate over and over again, even when she was not eating at all. Like almost all great persons of action, she was really a very spare eater. After the meal there was the great gathering, to look into the wonders of the box in which she brought varied things suitable for the different children. I never made inquiries as to whether she made sure of our number; but the fact is that each child

received a gift and none was left when the last had got his.

I remember that I created a scene once, when according to my opinion she had made a bad mistake by giving a little toy steamer to a cousin-sister. I do not exactly remember what she had given me. I do remember this, that I was very disconcerted ; but there was nothing left, and it was only a day or two after that that quiet was restored, when—to put it quite mildly—Mrs. Besant "bribed" this cousin-sister of mine with many other gifts in order that she might part with the steamer to me. I also remember that the steamer remained with me for a long time afterwards ; and I used to flaunt it by sailing it in a pond in the old ancestral garden house. She showed us many card tricks at the time of distributing her presents, and explained to us the mechanism of all the toys she gave, and the way each one of these gifts was to be used or manipulated. I remembered this box of hers when I was myself returning from England long afterwards in my own good time ; and I also brought a box with me, after hunting for various toys and gifts for a whole day in a big London shop. I doubt if I gave as much satisfaction to my youngers as she used to give to us.

HER LATER GIFTS TO US

The days passed and we grew older. The visits and the midday meal remained, but the gifts began changing. She was very keen on this meal to the last ; and when in 1921 my father was in jail during the first non-co-operation movement [16], and she had come to Benares for the Theosophical Convention[17], and I, along with the rest of the

Congress-minded[18] political Indians, was angry with her for her attitude[19], I had a letter from her saying: "I have not had my usual invitation to breakfast," I felt abashed. I sent the invitation; but I was too full of politics, and the meal was not the same. She kept quiet as I kept talking excitedly.

We now used to receive books with her superscription and autograph in her most beautiful handwriting. I know no one who wrote so beautifully as Mrs. Besant; and even if her manuscript covered a hundred pages, the last word was exactly in the same writing as the first. Let any of my readers compare his first page with his tenth, and I am almost certain that he would be surprised at the change the writing has taken on. It was not so with Mrs. Besant. I have seen her letters to my father—of which more later—some covering twenty or more pages; and there was absolutely no difference in the calligraphy from first to last. I still have a number of these books; though, to my deep sorrow, the book which I most prized—and that was G. A. Henty's[20] *In Freedom's Cause*, given to me in 1904, when I was about 14, and which I preserved with the greatest care and read over and over again: it is such a moving story of Scottish patriots trying to maintain their independence, with an English boy as the hero—was borrowed and lost by a relative who even denied that he had ever borrowed it, when I begged him to restore my prized possession.

THE STORY OF A PRIZE BOOK

There is one book that I still have and greatly value because of its history which may interest my readers.

The anniversary of the Central Hindu College used to be one of the great functions in Benares twenty-five years ago. Various schools and colleges in Benares now celebrate their anniversaries. I believe in those days only the Central Hindu College did. Those occasions invariably attracted large crowds. Local officials were glad to preside at them. Among the friendliest were Mr. Radice [21] and Mr. Baillie[22]. A memorial tablet to them is placed in the main College Hall, called the Kashi Naresh Hall [23] after the then Maharaja of Benares,[24] and was unveiled by Mrs. Besant with fitting ceremony. Another friendly official used to be Mr. Lovett [25], who also presided at some of these anniversary meetings. The chief attraction of these was Mrs. Besant's own speech : and she was almost at her best at these annual gatherings. My father, as the Secretary of the College, used to read out the annual report which was also a treat to hear. In 1906 when I was still at school, I had been selected by our very popular and much loved Headmaster, Mr. Arundale[26], for the English recitation, on this occasion. A poem by Sir Edwin Arnold[27], from among a volume of his collected works entitled *The Secret of Death and other Poems*[28], had been prescribed. Mr. Arundale took great pains to help me to commit it to memory; and himself sat as the prompter in his formal academic cap and gown as a Master of Arts of the University of Cambridge, as I stood on the platform to recite the poem. As usual in such cases, a prize is given to the reciter, and I had been asked to select my own prize. By a curious boyish freak of fancy I selected that very book for my prize. It was not available at the time—the Book Shop in The Theosophical Society's

compound[29] had not then attained the proportions it later did—and so I did not actually get the prize at the time; and it was assumed that I would get it some day later.

I believe I clean forgot all about the matter. Some months afterwards came a packet by post addressed to me in Mrs. Besant's own handwriting. I naturally opened it quickly, and was surprised to find a fresh copy of that self-same book of Sir Edwin Arnold's. On stretching out the packing paper, I discovered that on one part of it there was the Adyar address of Mrs. Besant herself, showing that the well-known London publishers of Sir Edwin Arnold's works, Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.,[30]—I have myself visited their establishment in London more than once—had sent it to her direct from London; and after receiving it at Adyar[31], Mrs. Besant had herself re-packed the book in the same wrapper after rearranging it; and putting fresh stamps and writing out my address, had re-posted it. For a person so busy as Mrs. Besant to have remembered a boy's fanciful demand; to have taken the trouble of writing to the publishers in London for the book; to have further remembered the person for whom the book had been procured when she received it weeks afterwards; and to have taken the trouble of repacking and reposting it all herself, was something remarkable. Mrs. Besant was a very neat person and packed her papers most carefully. She made strong and beautiful knots and was almost an artist with the sealing wax. She seemed to take infinite trouble over everything, even the smallest details of simple ordinary everyday matters. Today, when I myself have to do a fairly large

amount of work which is nothing when compared to what Mrs. Besant had to do, and often wish that even that amount were less than it is, and I think of the many incidents when Mrs. Besant took so much pains for me—I feel almost ashamed that I should have ever added to her work. I believe a younger never realises what pains the loving elders take for him; and we are all apt to complain of what is not done for us by others and are insufficiently grateful for that which is done.

That book is still with me—a very prized possession indeed. I got the school office to paste the usual slip on the book inside the front cover, showing the occasion and the reason for the prize; and later, when I met Mrs. Besant, I secured her signature upon it as Chairman [32] of the Managing Committee. She used to sign hundreds of such prize books herself from year to year. I remember heaps of these books lying for her to sign on her quadrangular *chauki* [33]—a large wooden seat covered with quilts on which she used to sit cross-legged like ourselves, and write at a desk, in Shanti Kunj, [34] the "Bower of Peace", her Benares home—just before these anniversary meetings. She used to sign whenever she got a few minutes to spare in intervals of her other work. There was no hurry in any of the signatures at all, and each signature was just like another and was almost like copperplate compared to signatures of others. It was only when in later years the school and college grew and the number of prizes became too large, and she had to spend most of her time in Adyar after her election as President of The Theosophical Society, [35] that a rubber stamp of her signature was used on these prize books.

Coming back to my own prize book, the "omnivorous insects"—the adjective is Mrs. Besant's own for white ants[36]—once got a chance and ate up a good bit of the original binding. Some years ago I had it renewed and took pains to get the slip with her signature carefully detached and repasted inside the new binding. There can really be few people who could have come in intimate touch with Mrs. Besant and not have indelible memories of her wonderful personality and her many personal kindnesses delicately shown.

AFFECTIONATE PERSONAL RELATIONS

It should be clear from all that I have said above that the relations of Mrs. Besant with my family were of the most intimate character; and she was keen that this intimacy should never be forgotten in any circumstances whatsoever. She used to edit the *Central Hindu College Magazine*[37], and she had the peculiar gift—I wish our Indian political leaders had it also—of encouraging persons around her to put forward their best, by praising almost exaggeratedly any good thing that they might do, and by creating personal bonds with them. I was not quite fifteen when I ventured to send an article for this Magazine, on a common language for India, actually advocating English as such common language.

I am amazed today at my own absurdity. I learnt English very early and perhaps then thought that everyone else should learn it also. In the covering letter which I sent with my article I addressed the editor as "Madam." A visit from

Mrs. Besant soon followed, and I was solemnly told that I was not to address her as "Madam," and that if I did not want to address her as "Mother"—an affectionate designation given to her by everyone—I could begin my letters to her with "Dear Mrs. Besant."

My embarrassment can be easily imagined; and not being used to English methods of addressing letters even when I was advocating English as our common language, I must have been fairly confused at the time. I distinctly remember, however, that I did not really come out second best in the contest. I told her that I had addressed the letter in her official capacity as the Editor of the Magazine and not in her personal capacity. Readers, be sure that I never addressed her as "Madam" again whether officially or non-officially. My mother[38] was present at this interview. It is surprising to me that my mother never learnt any English, as Mrs. Besant never learnt any Hindi. My mother asked Mrs. Besant what the matter was, and when it was explained to her, she quite innocently inquired whether my article was at all good. Mrs. Besant assured her that it was very good, which pleased me very much. If the greatest orator of the English language of her day, in whose hands the rich English language was as plastic as clay, tells the mother of an Indian boy of less than fifteen, that an article of his in the English language is good, he must be super-human if he does not feel elated. The article was duly printed in the Magazine and I became a butt of ridicule for my fellow students for some time afterwards.

The *Central Hindu College Magazine* was almost a pioneer in college and students' magazines now so common.

Mrs. Besant was great at giving attractive and catching titles. She called the section devoted to her editorial notes "In the Crow's Nest"; the section on book reviews was called "Our Library Table"; and the record of internal and allied external activities was known as "How the Movement Goes."

ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOUNGERS

Only a short time after my article on India's common language, Mrs. Besant gave me some manuscript stories of Rajput chivalry [39] in Hindi to translate into English for a book she had projected and which when published was called *Children of the Motherland* [40]. I translated some stories which she remoulded in her own inimitable style. The book was printed and I found to my surprise my name mentioned in the "foreword" as one of those who had "helped" her to compile the book, though I could not recognise anything of my own language in the stories which I was supposed to have helped her to compile.

I remember her listening with the greatest interest to the debates that we used to hold in the mock Parliament [41] we had established at her instance in the Central Hindu College. She would afterwards come down from the gallery and pick out the good speakers and praise them and encourage them and give them little tips as to what to say and how to say it. I remember myself being picked out once, as also the most earnest manner in which, after putting her hand on mine, she told me that there was no reason for my being so pessimistic, and that I spoke very

well and should develop my gifts. On the radical side in this Parliament there sat with me Prakash Narayan Sapru,[42] son of the great Allahabad lawyer the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,[43] and now himself an honourable member of the Council of State, and Sankar Saran,[44] son of Munshi Iswar Saran,[45] and now the Government Advocate of the Allahabad High Court. On the orthodox side was Ram Prasad Tripathi,[46] now a learned professor of history in the University of Allahabad, as also Santi Prasad Agarwal,[47] a well-known lawyer at Moradabad.

Mrs. Besant was a very serious-minded person. She took everything seriously, and, I believe, expected others to do the same, specially in their relations with her. My father tells me that this was due to her having seen the sad side of life so much ; but that she really liked to see young people about her laugh ; and herself indulged in delicately playful talk, at the morning coffee and afternoon tea, and other such familiar occasions. She had always a very benevolent smile for everyone.

HER ART OF SPEAKING

Mr. Arundale, her worthy successor in the high office of the President of The Theosophical Society,[48] was and still is always full of mirth and laughter. She loved him most dearly, as he did her, though the two natures were so different. I have often seen her smile as he joked—and he joked before her and made as many puns as before anyone else, for she appreciated the fun even when she would not indulge in it herself. In London at Miss Bright's[49] I

remember some one inquiring where Mrs. Besant was, and Mr. Arundale replying, "She is in the throes of packing." "In the throes of packing!" said Miss Bright, almost aghast —and everyone laughed. At Mr. Arundale's request Mrs. Besant once gave some of us at school, a class-room talk on 'How to Speak'. Perhaps her injunctions may be helpful today. "Do not shout", she said, "you are not necessarily audible if you shout. Pronounce the last syllable of your words distinctly and your voice will carry far". It is remarkable that Mrs. Besant was able to modulate her voice according to the area occupied by her audience. The person on the fringe of the crowd heard her as distinctly as the person sitting next to her; and the melody was such that at its highest the voice was as sweet to those near her as to those far away. My uncle told me that she would recite English poetry extraordinarily well and often gave much pleasure to him and a small party of her intimate friends by reading out to them portions of Tennyson's[50] *Idylls of the King*.

A person whose voice could be clearly heard by ten thousand people in the open air would, while conversing with just one man, speak so low that it was almost difficult to catch her words. I understand Mrs. Besant could never dictate to a secretary. All her letters, including business, formal and official ones, are all in manuscript. She wrote all articles, whether for newspapers or learned magazines, herself. The manuscript of all her books is also in her own handwriting. It is clear she wrote slowly and thinkingly. That is why her handwriting was so uniform, each letter well-shaped and perfectly legible, and the manuscript was never

revised so far as I am aware—and never bore any signs of correction. She used to have from time to time private secretaries; in other words, her friends and colleagues who used to travel with her on her tours—my father used to be one of these, and another I remember was Sardar Chiranjit Singh[51]—~~they~~ were glad to be known as her private secretaries. When she got very old, she had younger co-workers accompanying her; but she never had a personal assistant or a private secretary or a stenographer as we know them. She was a great artist in words, which in her mouth were like music, and her voice rose and fell as the waves of the sea in perfect rhythm when she spoke. It is a matter of deep satisfaction that microphones, loudspeakers and amplifiers had not come into existence in her younger days. The world would have otherwise lost the virgin beauty of her eloquence. Curiously enough, she was perhaps the first to start their use in India by fitting them at a Theosophical Convention in Adyar.

I have heard her lectures on the Hindu epics, the Mahâbhârata[52] and the Râmâyana,[53] as a little boy. These were later printed in book form, as *The Story of the Great War*[54] and *Shri Râmachandra, the Ideal King*[55], respectively. The former series was delivered in a house in the interior of the city of Benares where the first classes of the Central Hindu College were opened. I was only about eight at the time and could follow but little. These were her earliest days in Benares. Her audiences used to be very small then, but she never worried at any time of her life on that score. When the latter series was delivered, the Hindu

College had moved on to its own building. She was fond of having some Sanskrit prayer in conformity with orthodox Hindu ideas, beautifully recited before these lectures. Kanchi Prasad [56] used to be a boarder [57] at the time and a favourite of hers. He had a very musical voice and was invariably invited by Mrs. Besant to recite the famous prayer to Shiva [58] in five verses, each dedicated to a letter of the heading "Namah Shivâya" [59] (Hail, Shiva!) before she began her own lecture.

I have heard her many a time in the old Central Hindu College Hall and the Hall of The Theosophical Society in Benares, extolling Hindu religion and philosophy, the Hindu scheme of life, and defending many Hindu manners and customs that had been subjected to severe criticism both by Christian missionaries and by English-educated Hindus themselves. I have heard her lectures on various aspects of Theosophy in Benares, Adyar, and in London. Towards the end of her marvellous career I have also heard her lectures on Indian politics. Whether the audiences were large or small she always spoke with the same seriousness of purpose and eloquence of expression.

It seems to me that her best lectures were all carefully thought out, almost prepared, beforehand. She never carried any notes. She never consulted any papers as she spoke. Her memory must have been remarkable, and I believe she just rehearsed her lectures to herself once, before going into the lecture hall, and that was enough for her. She never faltered for a word and her voice never broke. She told us in one of her talks how she was fond of beautiful perorations, how she liked to end her speeches by working

up her audience to a certain pitch, leaving their minds in possession of some peculiarly tragic or pathetic scene created by the magic of her words. On this particular occasion she told us how she had ended a lecture with great effect describing India as a mother fallen to the ground in a swoon, who could be killed only by the blows of her own sons, and whom none else could touch.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUE OF SPEAKING

Mrs. Besant did not like any one to speak after her ; and quite rightly too, for who could heighten the impression, the effect, of her speech ? They could only mar it. At the annual meetings of The Theosophical Society, when she used to deliver what were called "Convention Lectures"[60]—four in number—one day was reserved for the celebration of the anniversary proper of The Theosophical Society. This usually was the third day of the lectures when representatives from various countries used to speak, and we used to hear with much amusement, not only how English is pronounced in the different provinces of our own country but also in non-English foreign parts. One of the invariable speakers of the early days used to be Mr. Vimadalal,[61] an earnest Parsi Theosophist, who as invariably began by referring to the coming of the Parsis to India and the warm welcome given to them in those unhappy days, with the words, spoken with eloquent emphasis : "Thirteen hundred years ago . . ." Her own lecture used to be the last. The venerable Col. Olcott,[62] with his grand head and face, framed in shining white locks and flowing beard, hero of the

American Civil War, President-Founder of The Theosophical Society, used to preside over these Convention lectures himself in the old days; but he never spoke anything after Mrs. Besant.

One year I remember Mrs. Besant started her lecture at the close of the anniversary proceedings, with an apology. She said that usually towards the end of a meal delicacies and savouries are served to whet the appetite. On this occasion all the savouries in the form of earlier speeches from the representatives of the different parts of the world, had already been served; and she now came unfortunately with a full and heavy dish of *dâl bhât* (rice and pulse, which is the usual chief vegetarian meal of the north of India). She caused a little merriment, and there was laughter from the audience. The incident is worth recording, because I cannot remember her attempting to rouse any amusement in her audience on any other occasion. She was too serious for it. I doubt if any of her speeches were ever punctuated with laughter like those of many of us, politicians, social reformers, educationists, theologians and others.

At these annual meetings no one spoke after her, and her last words invariably left her audience waiting and anxious for more that, it seemed, was almost sure to follow. So many speakers end their speeches by saying: "I have done"; "that is all that I have to say"; "I thank you for your patience in listening to me"; etc. Not so Mrs. Besant. She just finished off at the very height of her eloquence, and sat down or left the rostrum, leaving the audience to applaud and demonstrate as they liked. I

believe she really preferred to go away, and she always seemed to chafe when she had to continue sitting after her lecture.

I remember a lecture of hers at Oxford (1911). A clergyman was presiding. At the end of her talk, the chairman got up to speak again, as some chairmen will. This one had already spoken in the beginning, as was but right and proper for a chairman to do. This particular clergyman seemed to have been deeply affected by Mrs. Besant's eloquence—which was surprising, as officially Christian theology is at war with Theosophy—and in the second speech he said how grateful he was for the "intellectual treat" Mrs. Besant had given which almost reminded him of the ancient Gnostics. As he closed he informed the audience that the exit from the hall was to the left. Mrs. Besant was displeased; and she later told the organisers of her lecture that it was most improper that announcements about exits and such things should be made after her lecture and not beforehand.

Later, I happened to travel with her during her tour in Scotland. I remember her emphatically telling the chairman —and that was Mr. Graham Pole[63]—before one of her lectures that if he had any announcements about exits and such matters, he should get them made before she spoke. As an artist, the anti-climax, the bathos of such announcements, was unbearable to her.

She was also very keen on the arrangement of seats. In India, it is usual to leave the centre of the hall from the gate to the *dais* as an open passage, as an approach thereto, and the passage is also used by "important" late-comers to

walk up leisurely. The speaker usually stands at the upper end of this vacant "aisle." Mrs. Besant never liked that. I was often in charge of arrangements for lectures at the Central Hindu College, and my instructions were that the centre of the hall was to be filled up. I used to fill up the central portion with chairs, and left passages on the sides. She always liked these arrangements. She told me that if a lecturer stands at the end of an empty lane, he feels he has no one to listen to him, and the walking up and down of stray individuals is always a disturbing factor. As I also have had to do a good bit of public speaking since, I know how right she was.

HER LECTURING DRESS

She was very keen on her lecturing dress. She used to be very, very carefully and beautifully dressed in white at the time of her meetings. White is not a colour either for men or women's clothing in England. But even there she was dressed in white both in the daytime and in the evenings. Unlike conditions in England, in India if we book our luggage and keep it in the brake van while travelling by trains, we are never sure that it will arrive with us at our destination. Very often it is left at junction stations. In England they have no system of even receipts for booked luggage. The guard just leaves all the luggage entrusted to him at the proper stations and the passengers casually walk up and take away their own luggage. There is scarcely ever a miscarriage. I say this from experience. I was surprised at this system when I was

in England and wondered why my luggage did not get lost. There they do not allow much luggage in the passengers' compartments. In India we always try to take all our luggage with ourselves in our compartments. Mrs. Besant was always anxious to book her luggage so as not to be encumbered with it on the way. In England they have no system of receipts for telegrams either, and I remember my surprised look at the postmistress when I sent my first cable of safe arrival in London to my father and did not get a receipt. There the telegraph boy who brings the telegrams waits for a reply, and if the receiver wants to send a telegram in answer, he can safely entrust it to this boy. How I wish we could have a system like this in India—and work it with equal confidence.

I learnt that once her lecturing gown was in the box that had been booked and did not arrive at Calcutta with her. She was very worried and I believe she spoilt her lecture that evening because she had to deliver it without her usual costume. A similar situation arose also when I was going with her to England (1911). Her luggage did not arrive with us at Bombay, though it was all very carefully booked at Benares. My father, who is always a nervous traveller and had also gone up to Bombay with the party, had insisted on taking all mine in the compartment; and so that was quite safe. We were all guests of Seth Dharamsi Morarji.[64] I remember two visits with Mrs. Besant to Victoria Terminus Railway Station at Bombay where she herself anxiously inquired after her lost luggage. Luckily it arrived in time for the lecture which was not till the next day.

When I happened to be with her on her tour in Scotland in 1911, I accidentally happened to see the enormous number of bits of clothing that used to form her full lecturing costume there. We were all staying in a hotel, and some time before her lecture, wanting to go to my room while the party was still in the sitting-room, I happened to open hers by mistake. I hurried out; but I saw in those few seconds the whole big bed covered with a large number of white pieces of clothing. I presume she put all that on before she went to the lecture.

I myself put on the usual English evening dress for the lecture, as Mrs. Besant was very keen that all members of her party should be properly and conventionally dressed. I never liked these clothes. In fact I never could take to European costume. Mrs. Besant knew this and told me once that I must get over my pettinesses as I expected others to get over theirs. When I came back to the sitting-room I found Mrs. Besant in a corner dressed for the lecture with her face to the wall sitting quietly. I approached her to ask about something. I saw her face was taut and drawn and she seemed to be deep in thought. I naturally withdrew. I, however, got the idea then that she was repeating in her mind the lecture that she was to deliver. I never had courage enough to confirm my "suspicion", but I was confirmed in my belief that she timed herself because she invariably closed her lectures at the exact minute. Whenever she was the sole speaker, she always spoke for just 60 minutes. Her perorations began about two or three minutes before the end; and if any one cared to see his watch—

and I often looked at mine—her last word was uttered exactly as the hour closed.

When there were many speakers she used to make sure of how many minutes she was to speak. I happened to be sitting next to her at a lecture of hers to the Fabian Society[65] in London which was to have been presided over by Mrs. Bernard Shaw,[66] the wife of the famous G.B.S.[67], if my memory does not deceive me, but was actually presided over by Mrs. Sidney Webb.[68] The lecture was to be followed by questions and answers. It was a lecture on India. Mrs. Sidney Webb, just before opening the proceedings, turned towards Mrs. Besant and said: "Mrs. Besant, I believe you will speak for about 45 minutes." "I was asked to speak for 40", replied Mrs. Besant. "Oh, yes, yes," said Mrs. Sidney Webb, "that is all right, 40 or 45". Mrs. Besant persisted: "I was given 40". It seems to me that, as I have said above, just before her lectures she used to retire and go over what she was going to speak and time her lectures exactly.

HER PUNCTUALITY

She was punctual to a fault. Usually persons who do much literary work cannot be expected to be very punctual. They do not break off in the middle of an important thought for meals and engagements. They think nothing of keeping people waiting or being late themselves. Not so Mrs. Besant. Punctually at meal times she would put down her pen, discard her spectacles, and transfer herself to her table (in Europe) or *pirha* [69] (in India) as the case might

be (even without any dinner bells). Whenever she was delivering a series of lectures at the old Central Hindu College, we used to see her just three minutes before the prescribed time of the lecture, from day to day, issuing out of the gate that led from the Boarding House [70] to the Saraswati quadrangle [71], across which it took just three minutes for her to walk, in order to come into the lecture hall.

My father, like most of his countrymen, has never been a punctual person. Even his close association with Mrs. Besant could not knock out of him—always intensely busy as he has been—this "national defect" [72]. He has just one watch and one clock, and both are always wrong. The watch gets long rest cures, and is only occasionally wound up—really only when he is going out of the station and taking it with him—but the clock is a 400-day one and is wound up some time in January each year. Like most of his things it lasts: I have been seeing it with him for the last 35 years. It gives a fair indication of time within an hour or so of the correct time. This wonderful clock was revolving in its glory on his large marble writing table—its pendulum revolves first one way and then the other (I think it is called a 'torsion' pendulum) and does not swing from side to side—when Mrs. Besant, who had been sitting by him in his room for a long time, suddenly said after seeing her own watch: "Bhagavan"—(I have heard only my grand-uncle [73], and Mrs. Besant call my father by the half name: everyone else, including his elder brother, had always been very deferential to him: I believe some persons, like my father, are born old and respected)—"Bhagavan, your clock is very fast".

"I keep it purposely fast", my father replied. "I am a very unpunctual person, and so I keep my clock fast, and that helps me to keep my engagements approximately correctly". But, Mrs. Besant argued,—and it was amusing for me to listen to this conversation: it was long, long ago—"if you know that your clock is fast, you will continue to be slow, and then how can you be punctual?" My father, who will never allow himself to be beaten in an argument, replied: "By a great effort at mental gymnastics, I manage to, as it were, forget that this is incorrect and so I manage to get to my work in time", which really he seldom does, judged by strict canons of punctuality.

On another occasion, when Mrs. Besant was to come to tea with us of an afternoon, it was raining heavily. She was to go straight from our place to some function. The time that she had chosen for the tea—if I remember rightly—was 3-40 p. m. We had sent on our car for her, for if Mrs. Besant did not find any vehicle waiting for her at the time at which if she started walking she could get to her engagement punctually, she invariably started walking, so keen was she to keep her time. Lo and behold! in pelting rain but at the exact minute, we found her walking up from the gate to my father's room in the centre of our garden house. We rushed with umbrellas to protect her. She came up and leisurely sat down in the verandah [74] and spread out to dry the lapels of the beautiful sari she had put on for the meeting that was to follow. My father said: "Why did you trouble to come so early in this rain? It is not yet time. I believe you were to come at 4". She solemnly replied: "No, it was 3-40". Once when my father and I were

slightly late in going to her to take her to the Hindu University[75], where she had an engagement to see some buildings, we found her half way towards our house, walking briskly. At Cambridge, where I had arranged a public lecture for her, she was worried just before the lecture, though I assured her that I had arranged for a car to take her in time. She would not hear, and to our dismay walked to the lecture hall in her flowing lecturing robes; and the car arranged for really arrived in time—but only to follow later!

At the Calcutta Congress in December 1928, when Pandit Motilal Nehru[76] presided, there was much excitement and much confusion. Rival forces and ideologies were at work, and the various Congress meetings would never begin in time. Mrs. Besant used to arrive at the exact minute notified, and would sit patiently hour after hour while nothing was being done, the leaders just talking to each other waiting for something to turn up. Very often at these Subject Committee[77] meetings after waiting for hours they dispersed, adjourning their meeting to the next day. I happened to be standing on the way leading to the exit as the meeting was adjourned on one such day. Mrs. Besant was visibly irritated; and passing me said: "Prakasa, I am beginning to understand why the British rule you". The 'beginning' was amusing to me as she had been with us for 34 years already. When I spoke of the incident to Jawaharlal Nehru,[78] he amusedly replied: "She is rather late in beginning". She was angry at these interminable delays and adjournments and our absolute indifference to the value of time. I knew her weakness for punctuality. I laughingly said to her: "You had better come by the standard time and

not by the Calcutta time". (In Calcutta they still keep to the local Calcutta time, which is 24 minutes in advance of the standard time observed by railways and everywhere else. In other words if it is 8 o'clock according to the Calcutta time, it is only 7-36 according to the standard time.) "That is very good advice", she said to me, "I must follow that, thank you". The next day to my utter amazement I saw her mounting the dais of the Subjects Committee exactly 24 minutes (according to my watch) after the advertised Calcutta time for the meeting. Let my readers believe me: I am not exaggerating at all. Thus she had saved 24 minutes; but the Congress work continued to be at a standstill then, as on the day before. The programme had not been fixed, the resolutions had not been drafted and everything continued in confusion. The chief problem[79] before the Congress was how to wrest *Swaraj* or independence for India from England. No wonder Mrs. Besant, in her just irritation, criticised the proceedings when she had spoken to me the day before.

STRONG MEMORY

I went up to her and talked of other matters. Her face lit up a little and she seemed glad. I had decided to celebrate the 60th birthday of my father that was to fall on the succeeding Mauni Amavasya[80] day which was to occur in 1929 on February 9, about six weeks later. The English date of his birth is January 12, 1869, but according to our lunar calendar which we observe in all such matters, the date shifts from year to year, by a few days. I was anxious that

she, as my father's closest and most honoured friend and colleague, should write something about him for the occasion. I told her of my plan and she was glad of it. I asked her if she would be able to come. She said she was sorry she could not, as she would be engaged elsewhere on that day. She told me she would send me an appreciation of my father and his work, and also a telegram of greetings on the day. She made a note of it on some paper. I also asked her for three large autograph photographs of her as I said those she had given us in the past were all fading and I was anxious to have her latest portraits. I wanted one for our rooms in Benares ; I wanted another for my father's rooms at Chunar [81], where he had shifted in retirement ; and I wanted one for the Kashi Vidyapith [82]—a national educational institution founded in Benares by the munificence of Shri Shivaprasad Gupta [83]—where it was my desire to put up portraits of all the pioneers in modern Indian education : and she certainly was among the greatest and noblest of them. She made a note of these also. I later received the three portraits, which are all at the destined places, and I received also the note on my father in time for the function. This I had printed as a folder and distributed. I also received the promised telegram of greetings and good wishes on the exact date.

Let me give another illustration of her remarkable memory. As a college student I remember an invitation from her for a talk. In the course of this conversation I talked on many things, and I specially remember my mentioning a fellow student who was a dear friend of mine, and who had done a great deal of valuable service by enabling many poor students

of the College to receive their education. I said that he deserved the C.H.C. silver [84] badge. A distinctive badge had been created by the College authorities for those who rendered special service to the institution. The elders received gold C.H.C. badges, the two "C's" entwining the central 'H' facing opposite sides, and the deserving youngers the silver one. Mrs. Besant said that my proposal was very good as she knew the young man's good work herself. She asked me to write his name on a piece of paper. I did so. I was continuing to write the purpose for which the slip was written but she stopped me. She said the name was enough. She would remember. I put the slip on the top of a huge pile of papers on her desk that were waiting to be disposed of. Her table was always loaded with piles of letters, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, press proofs and books. No one looking at them, however, could feel that there was any confusion or disorder. She was a very neat and orderly person, and her rooms were simple. She had too a huge waste-paper basket in her room at Benares, which was more often full than otherwise. She had a peculiar method of tearing papers. She tore them just lengthwise over and over again, instead of breadthwise and lengthwise alternately as I believe all the rest of the world does.

Some time later at a meeting of the students of the college, without any previous notice or anyone knowing of it, she pulled out this badge, called for that particular student—much to his own surprise and embarrassment—and presented the badge to him. That student was Mangla Prasad [85], who was the founder and in his time the life and

soul of the Vidyarthi Sahayak Sabha[86], a society for the helping of poor students of the College—he died in 1920 at the very early age of 33 of tuberculosis. Mrs. Besant's memory was truly remarkable. The movement of the Vidyarthi Sahayak Sabha has caught on, and most educational institutions have such associations now. The one we had at the Central Hindu College always received the greatest possible amount of assistance and encouragement from Mrs. Besant herself. In the later years of my college life, we used to celebrate with great *eclat* her birthdays at the Central Hindu College on October 1 each year, and made collections for the occasion which sometimes came to more than a thousand rupees. We used to present all that in a purse to her. She always gave back this money to the various institutions of the College itself, a large proportion going to this Vidyarthi Sahayak Sabha. She would take no money for herself, saying she had pledged herself to eternal poverty in some previous birth long, long ago. Friends bore all her expenses; and though apparently she lived well, she was severely simple in her living, and spent all she got on her public activities. I believe her books gave her a good bit of money, and friends put large sums at her disposal year after year for her travelling.

Though so scrupulously exact as to time at lectures and engagements, Mrs. Besant was very unpunctual—in the opposite direction of being too early—when catching trains or attending amusements. For her to be at a railway station thirty to forty-five minutes in advance of a train was a very common phenomenon; and when I had to travel with her, I almost always found that she had arrived at the

railway station long before I did. I cannot account for it, and it always seemed to me rather strange that such a very busy and time-saving person, and one who was constantly travelling, should be willing to waste so much time at railway stations. She was a woman of great repose of mind, even when she was busiest. One never found her hurried or flurried in any circumstance. In fact if any one tried to hurry matters, she would reply, " I do not like being hustled ". I believe she would often give the impression that she had nothing to do, as she seemed to do everything apparently leisurely.

ADHERENCE TO PROPRIETIES

She was very keen on proprieties ; she would follow the customs of a place punctiliously, and would be obviously shocked if any one did not follow them. She had come one morning to Cambridge (1912), accompanied by her party, consisting of Mr. Jinarajadasa,[87] Lady Lutyens,[88] Mr. Krishnamurti[89] and Mr. Nityanandam,[90] at my invitation, while I was studying there. I established her in a hotel. I had arranged that she and her party would take lunch with me in my rooms. I went to fetch her from the hotel. In England it was not then customary to walk in public streets without a hat. In the University at that time, however, students had established the convention of walking about in the streets without hats. When she saw me without a hat she asked me what had become of it. She was quite positive that she did not like a man without a hat in the public streets. It seemed very much like my mother

asking me in my youth where my cap was, as in those days in Benares it was supposed to be disrespectful not to keep a cap on in the presence of elders. During this same walk from the hotel to my rooms I excitedly started walking fast. She stopped and said quite deliberately: "I cannot walk so fast." I was amused. Not very long before at the Theosophical Convention at Adyar (1910) I had seen her walk. She would issue out after tea in the afternoons and make a round of the extensive grounds, supervising all the arrangements, giving instructions to every one about everything. A crowd used to follow her. She walked so fast that it was difficult for many to keep up with her, but at Cambridge she could not walk fast. Elderly respectable ladies do not walk fast in the streets of English towns; and she would not break a local custom. She always preferred to follow, very much like the Buddha [91] of old, the customs of the people she sojourned with for the time being —she wanted no fuss, and no special arrangements to be made for her.

We had established a Theosophical Lodge at Cambridge, a fact duly recorded in *The Theosophist* [92] of the time, with the names of those, including mine, who had helped in the work. She would not let go any occasion to say publicly a good word for any who helped her and her work in any way. I had extended an invitation to her on its behalf to deliver a public lecture at this conservative place as well We were only nine or ten members of the Lodge, and we had all gone to the station to receive her. She had known only two of us before, and the rest were strangers to her. I clean forgot to introduce anyone to her, taking

it for granted, as we unfortunately do in India, that every one knew every one else. After the party had alighted from the train and I was forgetting this important formality, she said to me: "Prakasa, will you please introduce me to everyone". It was not that everyone was to be introduced to her, but that she was to be introduced to them! I remember once in the drawing room of Miss Bright[93], her London hostess, she got up from her seat while taking tea, and walked up to a visitor saying: "I am Mrs. Besant", as if she needed any introduction! Once I remember, in my later days when perhaps she felt I had grown old and big myself, she actually got up to receive me as I entered her room!

MRS. BESANT AT AMUSEMENTS

The other occasion when she used to be 'unpunctual' was that of amusements. As at railway stations, she arrived at places of amusement much in advance of the time. She was not a person to go to many amusements; but she was anxious to show Messrs. Krishnamurti[94] and Nityanandam[95] on their first visit to England, when I too formed one of her party, as much of the new world as possible. Instead of entrusting us to others, she used to go out of her way, to various places, to show them to us herself. The only time I saw St. Paul's Cathedral[96] was with her. The year I went to England, 1911, was the Coronation year of the late King George V.[97] In fact we had arrived just before the Coronation, and London was all agog. We went with her to many shows, including some military rehearsals.

The memory that is very clear in my mind is of my first visit to the famous theatre, His Majesty's[98], where I saw Herbert Tree[99] and other great English actors of the day.[100] The play was *Julius Caesar*,[101] and Mrs. Besant had booked seats for all of us in the opera circle, where everyone was expected to come in evening clothes. We all arrived with her about half an hour before the play began. In England there is no pushing about in the crowds and every one goes about his business quietly forming *queues*.[102] Our seats moreover were reserved. There was absolutely no risk; but the whole party had gone with her quite early, after an early dinner. Mrs. Sharpe[103] was to meet us there. She had not arrived when we got there; so Mrs. Besant left word with the man at the gate saying that one of her party was to follow and that she should be allowed to join us. The tickets were all with her. Mrs. Sharpe came later and expressed her surprise that Mrs. Besant should have come so early. When Mrs. Besant said that she thought it would be convenient to come in good time, I remember Mrs. Sharpe saying: "I should not have expected you to come so early—particularly to an amusement!" The one thing that amused me very much in those early months in England was the way in which Mrs. Besant used almost to overdress Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam and bedeck them with jewels. She seemed to me very much like an old-fashioned Indian mother over-doing things with her first-born!

MRS. BESANT AND MY FAMILY

Such a flood of memory overpowers me as I write about Mrs. Besant that I fear I have been constantly and unconnectedly hopping to and fro between the years 1897 and 1911, and not following the sequence of events at all. I think it is time that I took up the threads again from the beginning and traced various events in their chronological order, if that is possible in a study like this. I do not know exactly how the close associations of Mrs. Besant with my family began. My father has often told us of his first meeting with Mrs. Besant. He was posted as a magistrate at Allahabad at the time, and Mrs. Besant had come to the town. He had gone to receive her. They must have taken to each other almost at once,[104] for before long, my father resigned his Government service[105] and joined Mrs. Besant in her work for the Central Hindu College and The Theosophical Society. My father is not an emotional person by any means and it takes a long time for him to thaw. For a great philosopher as he undoubtedly is, he is a very calculating individual, and painfully weighs the pros and cons of everything before he decides upon his line of activity. No one can deceive or exploit or take any advantage of my father, and he deceives or exploits no one either. Some persons, I believe, suspect he is hard, harsh and unsympathetic. He is certainly always wrapped up in his own thoughts and is mainly concerned with his own work and affairs. He has little patience with those who come to waste his time out of idle curiosity or take any advantage of his position in an improper way. Not only is he the

author of *The Science of the Emotions*,[106] as a rule he is a master of his emotions as well. I believe only three persons have received his real love—they are his two sons and Mrs. Besant, though he has had many friends also, older as well as younger than himself, whose visits to our house I remember, but who, my memory tells me, were almost all more respectful than affectionate in their converse with him and temperamentally very different from him.

For Mrs. Besant my father's attachment was as supreme as it was spontaneous ; whenever they met my father always kissed her right hand most affectionately in greetings and salutation. In 1905 when he was very seriously ill, confined to bed for many months—of which I will have something to say later—and Mrs. Besant was travelling in Europe and America, I, though not quite 15, as his eldest son, had to bear a very heavy responsibility, as I had to look after the family, do the nursing, and act as his secretary as well. Mrs. Besant's letters came every week. I believe my father and she wrote to each other almost every day when she was in India, but out of Benares, and every week when she was away from the country. Mrs. Besant's letters which I had to read were most endearingly addressed, were full of the most affectionate sentiments and were almost always very long. I remember him dictating to me his reply to her one week while he was tossing in pain with an unbearable earache, telling her of his physical sufferings, wondering why he was so suffering, for he was sure he had done nothing in this life that merited so much pain, but was equally sure he must have done something very wrong in his previous existence ; and he ended by saying : "The hope

of seeing you again is the only thing that is keeping me alive". My father's love and devotion to Mrs. Besant were something unique.

LOYALTY TO FRIENDS

Mrs. Besant always inspired the deepest affection for herself in those who associated with her. She introduced us to the name of her old and famous colleague, Charles Bradlaugh,[107] fairly early in my life. I remember to have read two volumes on Charles Bradlaugh by his daughter, Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh-Bonner[108], when I could not have been more than 13 or 14 years of age. I do not know where those volumes are, but I remember being surprised that Mrs. Bonner had given only one chapter to Mrs. Besant. She has described the great affection that existed between her father and Mrs. Besant, and she has even gone on to say that the love was so great that if they had been free they certainly would have married. Personally, I think Mrs. Besant was the one person who was capable of the deepest of affections without any thought of sex ; and she was a woman of such remarkable courage that when she was working with colleagues she did not care what the world thought of her personal attachment to those colleagues and her absolute abandon to the Cause for which they were working together.

Mrs. Besant's fidelity to her friends was also of a very high order. She would neither say any evil word about them nor hear even the friendliest of criticisms of them. She would herself speak words of high praise of her colleagues

whenever she had an opportunity of doing so to others. She boldly, almost recklessly, defended Madame Blavatsky [109] when charges of charlatanry were levelled against her; she strained every nerve to protect Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam when her guardianship of them was challenged and aspersions and insinuations of all sorts were made against her and her colleagues [110]; and she was in her best fighting mood defending Mr. Arundale and his wife [111] when orthodox Madras was up in arms against them for their international and interracial marriage, and her faithful stand by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater[112], her friend and colleague, through thick and thin, is a remarkable example of courage and true affection. One day she was expatiating on Bradlaugh's philosophy to my father when he said with his usual impatience at any intellectual lapses from the strictest possible canons of logic: " Charles Bradlaugh seems to be putting the cart before the horse ", and Mrs. Besant replied quite irritably: " No, my dear, he was doing nothing of the sort ". I believe she disliked anyone talking evil of others. I remember my uncle describing to her a member of the Government of India as the worst possible man. She soothingly put her hand on his head and said, 'Govind [113], my dear, there may be easily worse persons in the world.'

Mrs. Bonner has described Mrs. Besant in those books—in just a couple of sentences which do not appear on the surface to be very complimentary: " She is a woman of no originality, but has a masterly capacity of assimilating other people's ideas and putting them in glowing language. She is bound to be the head of any movement she cares to join ". I cannot say whether Mrs. Besant was original or not. In a

sense, in the very nature of things, there can be very little that is strictly original in the world. All thoughts have already been thought ; all deeds have already been done. We can only repeat thoughts in our own words and do the deeds over again in our own way. There is no doubt that Mrs. Besant, like all human beings, had to learn and eagerly learnt from others. I believe much of her knowledge of ancient Indian philosophy and psychology came from my father and of *Bhakti* [114] literature from other Indian colleagues.

And, of course, she herself read standard English translations of important Sanskrit [115] works in the intervals of her own incessant and immense lecturing and writing work. She has eulogised my father's works on philosophy, psychology, and social organisation greatly, in a number of her own books, and regarded them as very original ; though he has always stoutly maintained that there is absolutely nothing new in what he has written, except the wording ; that all the thought is derived from the ancient Sanskrit books ; that he has only re-interpreted them in new words ; that it was Madame Blavatsky's great books—*Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* [116] primarily, and western evolutionist science secondarily, that threw light, for him, upon such of the significance as he has been able at all to see, of those old texts, and which significance, according to him, had become hidden and forgotten in the course of the ages. My uncle, however, always said that all that was nonsense, that he never saw any of my father's thoughts in the old books with which he felt he was equally familiar, and was really sorry that my father always unnecessarily and forcibly

tried to see the reflection of his thoughts in the teachings of the ancient and would not boldly give them out as his own and take credit for them himself. Well, I have nothing to do with this quarrel; I do not understand these things—and do not want to either. I view the problems of life from an absolutely different standpoint. Mrs. Besant's mind was very receptive; her brain grasped things very quickly. Her sympathetic imagination and understanding made things easy for her. As to her glowing language, there can be no two opinions. That she always did become the head of any movement she joined is amply proved by the moving story of her life. She had hardly joined The Theosophical Society when she became the foremost figure therein. She actively came into Indian politics only in 1914, and she was the President of the Indian National Congress in 1917, giving a new tone to it and establishing many precedents, the chief being that the President was the President for a whole year, that is till the next annual session. She insisted on this right herself, and actively worked for the Congress throughout the year of her Presidentship. Her example caught on, and the convention established by her became later a part of the Congress Constitution. Before her Presidentship, the President just presided at the session for which he was elected, and then went away into comfortable private life. She was particularly severe on Lord Sinha[117], who after presiding over the Congress in 1915, became everything afterwards except an active worker in the Congress cause.

THE STORY OF A LECTURE

I do not know how far the story is correct, and I cannot verify it as both the actors are no more alive. But here it is as I heard it. A lecture by Mrs. Besant on Jainism had been notified somewhere in Madras. My uncle was accompanying her on her tour at that time. She developed high fever on the day, and everyone advised that the lecture should be cancelled. She said she would go through with it at any cost, since it had been notified. She asked my uncle to tell her something about Jainism, and he told her the intricacies of that philosophy in a few brief sentences. Her fever at the time of the lecture was so high that my uncle had almost to carry her from the entrance of the lecture hall to the dais. He was a strong man physically except when he was down with asthma, which he regularly was, during the winter months, unless at the seaside. Mrs. Besant could hardly stand, and she had to be held while she was standing. She could never speak sitting. Soon she warmed up and treated her audience to an hour's fervid eloquence on Jain Philosophy. My uncle is reported to have told the person who passed on this story to me, that the main ideas of Jainism were what he had communicated to her, but if he himself had tried even for a whole lifetime he could not have put them in the language she did! He knew the English language remarkably well, and was an omnivorous reader of English books, and moreover he was by no means a modest man and was justly proud of his knowledge. I believe Mrs. Besant herself once spoke or wrote about him as an encyclopedia of information.

MRS. BESANT AND CHARLES BRADLAUGH'S FAMILY

The single Chapter dealing with Mrs. Besant in his daughter's life of Charles Bradlaugh (~~see page 26~~) is headed, "My father loses a friend—and gains one". The one he gained was Mrs. Besant herself. I forget the name of the person whom he lost. I read about Charles Bradlaugh and Abraham Lincoln [118]—all figures introduced to us by Mrs. Besant in her speeches to the Central Hindu College students—as far back as 1903, I believe. About ten years later, when Mrs. Besant came to Cambridge (1912) we arranged a tea party for her in the rooms of V. C. Patwardhan,[119] a dear friend and earnest Theosophist, and, like so many others, a great admirer of Mrs. Besant. He was a contemporary of mine at Cambridge. A more angelic man I think it would be difficult for me to meet, and it was a matter of deep sorrow for me that his life—in many ways a tragic one—ended on an operating table in America.

Another contemporary of mine was Charles Bradlaugh-Bonner[120], also a student like Patwardhan and myself at Trinity. He was the son of Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh-Bonner, and thus was a grandson of the great Charles Bradlaugh. He carried on the tradition of the grandfather so far as religious belief was concerned; and I believe he was an important member of a society at the time at Cambridge called "The Heretics". I invited him to this party we were giving to Mrs. Besant and he declined to come. At the party itself I told Mrs. Besant that Bradlaugh-Bonner was

also a student of the College at the time and she told me she would have been glad to see him.

Mrs. Besant seemed to have found out, almost immediately on her arrival here, what the trouble was with India and her youth, and so she introduced in her casual as well as public talks, many figures of European and American history, besides the ancient heroes of our own land, in order, I believe, to fill our minds with high ideals and spur us to high endeavours, so that we might help in making our country what she ought to be in the world. I believe she soon saw how fond we are in India of words and how averse to action. Once she told us of the words of Charles Bradlaugh to her—almost the first: "You have a fatal facility for words, Mrs. Besant. You ought to study for two hours before you speak for one." I have advised many budding politicians in India to that effect—but in vain. I find it difficult to follow the advice myself very often.

OLD C.H.C. DAYS

When thinking of those early days, the early days of the foundation of the Central Hindu College, many faces come to my memory. There was Dr. Richardson[121], the Principal, and Harry Banbury[122], the Headmaster. Dr. Richardson was a great man of science, and in those early days, when there was no money, he would painfully make with his own hands various coils and other things to teach science. He was an enthusiast, and he introduced 'object lessons' for the various classes of the school also, so that we could be early introduced to the wonders of science. At his invitation, his

teacher, Sir William Ramsay [123], when travelling in India, came to Benares, and delivered a lecture at the Central Hindu College. I have only a vague memory of the experiments he showed—of various colours produced in glass tubes. I believe they were experiments in electricity. Harry Banbury was fond of Sandow's [124] exercises and dumb-bells and drills. There was Miss Lloyd[125], a dear old lady, 'the mother of the Boarding House', as she was affectionately known. She made us all members of her 'Golden Chain' and made boys say—I quote from memory: "I am a link in the Golden Chain of Love that stretches round the world, and I must keep my link bright and strong". This was followed by beautiful words breathing brotherhood and affectionate goodwill for all—men and animals alike!

Then came Mr. and Miss Arundale.[126] Miss Arundale was an English lady in the truest sense of the word, very conservative, spruce, strict and correct. She was so to the last. When I congratulated her on her son's wedding, she said: 'I am glad George [127] has married; but,' she added, referring to the bride,[128] 'I wish she had been English'. Almost all English folk working in the Central Hindu College and The Theosophical Society took to Indian clothing; Miss Arundale was one of the exceptions. She always ate with forks and knives. I was first introduced to these implements of the dining table by her. We gave Mr. and Miss Arundale, when they first came out, a warm welcome at the Moghal Sarai Junction railway station, 10 miles away from Benares, where all passengers for Benares from Bombay, and in those days even from Calcutta, had to change, and where we

often went in large numbers to offer welcome or bid farewell to Mrs. Besant and other elders.

I was by no means a very quiet student at school or college, and I believe I gave anxious hours to many teachers. Mr. Arundale often felt quite nervous about me and would have long and friendly talks with me. In politics, even as a boy, I was an extremist, and once I believe I used strong language against the powers-that-be at a public meeting of students in the city at which he was presiding. He spoke about this to my father, who felt that perhaps Mr. Arundale had taken my words as a personal insult, and asked me to offer my apologies to him. I did so and assured him that I meant nothing personal. Mr. Arundale told me that he did not mind what I said ; but the days were bad—the bomb had just then come into Indian politics—and he did not want me to be arrested. The C.I.D.[129] was strong and kept vigilant eyes on students. This was in 1907 and my first arrest did not come till 1930 ; but it did come after all ! [130]

COLLECTING WORKERS

In one of the talks I had with Mr. Arundale at the time, he told me how he had come to India. He had taken his degree at Cambridge and was justly proud of it. He had gone to a lecture by Mrs. Besant in London, and was deeply affected by her eloquence and by her pleading for justice to India. He was still in the hall intoxicated with her eloquence, —Mrs. Besant had retired from the rostrum—when some one came and told him that Mrs. Besant wanted to see him

outside the lecture hall. Mr. Arundale was surprised, felt flattered and hurried to her. It seems that she just quietly told him: "I should like you to come and help me in my work in India". The invitation was no sooner given than it was accepted; and the aunt [131] and the nephew [132] were soon on their way to our country. Mr. Arundale went on to say that if he had received the applause that Mrs. Besant was receiving at the time—since then, Mr. Arundale, who has become a finished speaker, and has worthily succeeded Mrs. Besant to the Headship of The Theosophical Society, must have deservedly received such applause himself many a time—he would have lost his head, and would not have thought of anything else. The echoes had scarcely died in the hall; but Mrs. Besant had already finished with the topic; and had switched off her mind to other things. She was collecting her men for her work, who were only glad to be invited to serve her. That shows how Mrs. Besant was a born leader and how she was able to spot the proper persons with the proper qualities for the proper work and bring people together for a common cause.

Mrs. Besant always disliked having any piece of paper in front of her while she was speaking. She thought that was a great impediment. Once I remember her reading out her annual survey of the work of The Theosophical Society at an anniversary of The Society in Benares. She had placed the manuscript on the table, and was reading out finely, as if she was speaking. Still it was not the same. I remember that towards the end of her lecture she said: "Let golden bonds unite those whom Karma's [133] iron chains have drawn together".

That was her ideal of the bond that was to unite all workers together who were working for a common cause.

I do not wonder that even a solitary-minded, individualistic-natured, studious, scholarly person like my father, content in every way, and desiring nothing more than not to be disturbed, should have been drawn so intensely to Mrs. Besant. He *did* work hard for the Central Hindu College, largely for her sake; and he, who if he hates anything hates travelling, did travel also with Mrs. Besant from end to end of the land in the service of the Central Hindu College and The Theosophical Society. He could, however, never be induced to go outside India. It was because of Mrs. Besant's encouragement, often at her express wish, that he wrote his books. He does not very readily oblige others by acceding to their wishes in anything: but he, I believe, seldom said 'no' to Mrs. Besant.

I have many memories of large dinners and tea-parties in our house when the persons connected with the Central Hindu College whom I have already mentioned came to us, as also many others—Theosophists from other parts of the world who had come to Benares for Theosophical meetings. I almost feel old as I mention the names: Countess Wachtmeister [134] was one, another was Mrs. Windust [135]; these had been fellow-workers of Madame Blavatsky, and one of these had told me that Madame Blavatsky was not a very comfortable person to live with. Mrs. Besant, though a devoted pupil of Madame Blavatsky, was temperamentally a very different person; and I believe most people liked to live with her who had a chance. I must not forget Miss Palmer [136], Miss Edger [137], Miss Herrington [138], Miss Willson [139]

(of whom I will say something later also), and Mr. Ernest Wood [140] who stood against Mr. Arundale for Mrs. Besant's successorship. I do not remember Mr. Leadbeater [141] ever coming to our house. My father used to spend long hours with Mrs. Besant almost every day; and when she did not come to him, he would go with his papers to Shanti Kunj, and work there in the verandah adjoining Mrs. Besant's room where I often went to him on business.

Among my own countrymen who had gathered round Mrs. Besant, besides my elder uncle and my father, were the Basu Brothers, Upendra Nath [142] and Jnanendra Nath [143] and their cousin, Kali Charan Mittra; [144] Mr. Durga Prasad [145] and Pandit Cheda Lal; [146] then there were Pandit Aditya Ram [147] and Mr. Gurtu [148] followed much later by Messrs. Telang [149], Trilokikar [150], Unwalla [151], Dalal [152]. Sanjiva Rao [153], Wodehouse, [154] Taraporewala, [155] Kanitkar [156], and others. I should like to give a paragraph to each. I feel I know each well enough to do so. But I dare not. Enough to say—their tempers, temperaments, even beliefs and ideals, were very different one from another, but they were all devotedly attached to Mrs. Besant.

I should not forget a picturesque figure of the time. The Japanese priest, Ekai Kawaguchi, a good friend of ours, also lived in the staff quarters of the Central Hindu College for nearly seven years, and wrote an interesting book on his travels in Tibet, which Mrs. Besant published under the title "Three Years in Tibet" [157]. I must not forget also Abhay Charan Gui [158], the head clerk of the Principal's office. Abhay Charan was an amazingly efficient individual, his handwriting was most perfect, and he

wrote so swiftly that few could keep pace with him. He called out the names and took the attendance of three to four hundred students in less than as many minutes. Mr. Arundale used to say that he himself was the Principal only in name: he was a mere rubber stamp, a signing machine; the real Principal was Abhay Charan, who did all the work, and was methodical and conscientious to a fault. I had won a scholarship of, I believe, Rs. 12 per month from the Allahabad University, for passing fairly high in their First Arts (or Intermediate) University examination. He used to receive at his office and give me the scholarship regularly. As I left for England immediately after my B.A., that is the next higher university examination, before the amounts for the last two months were received, he kept this money in an envelope in a corner of his drawer. More than three years later when I returned and went to the College to meet old friends and teachers, I went into the College office also. As soon as he saw me and before even acknowledging my greetings, he pulled out the drawer, took the money out of it and handed it to me saying: "I have kept it for three years for you". He took my signature in acknowledgment and then proceeded to the inquiries and greetings usual for such occasions.

MEMORIES OF DINNERS AND FOODS

Perhaps the description of one of these early dinners at our house may not be uninteresting. It was a large party. I fear the house had not silver plates enough for all. We, in India, are a simple people, and we are not taken

aback when we have a large party to entertain. We use plantain leaves for plates and earthen vessels for cups, tumblers, etc. We all eat with our fingers and so no knives, forks or spoons are needed. Then we have no courses, and all the food is served at once. The servers—usually younger members of the family—keep constantly going round replacing those items of food that may have been eaten. Even the richest people in India feel no 'inferiority' in themselves serving out food to guests. On ceremonial occasions, custom often demands that this should be done. The hosts themselves eat after the last guest has left. We sit on a cloth or wooden seat, spread on the floor, and put the food on the washed bare floor, in front. All of us boys and girls had been busy arranging this dinner in one of the large rooms in our old house. It was the rainy season, otherwise we would probably have laid out the leaf-plates under the skies. There was a large variety of sweets, and we were told to put only half of each piece of sweet on each plate, as European people did not like Indian sweets very much; they find too much sugar in them. This caused me surprise then, and I appreciated the situation only when I ate my first chocolate, only to spit it out in disgust; even now I do not like it very much.

Orthodoxy was still strong; and many Hindus, otherwise earnest Theosophists, did not dine with non-Hindus, even though brothers in the faith. Some, however, did come. On one of these plates we had arranged in a very symmetrical manner, in the shape of a garland of flowers, the various kinds of sweets. This plate we had reserved for my uncle,

who was a hearty eater, and so we had not cut the sweets into halves as on the other plates. My father and his brothers were all very hearty eaters. Those who knew them in their younger days often told me and my cousins—by way of comparison uncomplimentary to us—that they used to spend all their pocket money in good food and good books. They built up perhaps the largest private library of the time in Benares, besides big muscles. It appears they all took heavy physical exercises and heavy meals at the end. They also read too much. My generation has done none of these things and I am not sure if they are much the worse for this lack!

As the guests trooped in, Mrs. Besant, passing this particular plate, liked the arrangement on it and smilingly insisted on sitting there. We do not reserve seats or mark the names thereon of guests as they do in Europe. The plates are served before the guests come in. I believe she left the whole plate practically untouched. She seemed to have realised our custom fairly early, that we wasted our food to a great extent, though we as a nation are admittedly very poor and most of our people do not get even one square meal per day. Unlike European hosts, we give no choice to the diner to take what he likes and only as much as he can eat. Here the servers are supposed to judge the diner's appetite, and often despite his repeated protests that additional helpings are *not* wanted, delicacies and savouries, and even more solid eatables, are piled on perforce. It is taken for granted that guests are shy, and viands must be given liberally. It is possible that in the early days Mrs. Besant used to say "No, thank you", but when

she found that all that was unavailing, and things *would* be placed upon her plate, she probably gave up. I never found her say 'yes' or 'no', as we piled edibles before her; and she just left everything, only eating a little of what she happened to like. A thing like this would be impossible even at the most sumptuous of feasts in Europe.

Many of my Indian readers who have had occasion to serve food to Mrs. Besant, might remember that the two items that she really liked were the *samosa* and the *papar*. *Samosa* is a triangular salt savoury, usually stuffed with potatoes and small raisins and grains of peppercorn; but in our family, those made at home were stuffed with fried and ground *moong* [159] pulse. My mother took special pains to prepare these for Mrs. Besant herself. She liked them very much; and we often sent these for her tea, and put up a supply of them when she was travelling. She also liked *papar*, 'cracklers' (translated as *poppadam* in Eustace Miles' vegetarian [160] restaurant in London in my time). She found the Madras ones very hot, with too much pepper, and almost to the last I used myself to send to her packets of these north India *papars* which were not hot. I believe she was very fond of them. Another thing that she seemed to like very much was ice cream, at least in the early days, and so this dainty was prepared almost every evening at Shanti Kunj. I remember to have partaken of it often enough there. I doubt, however, if she ever came to like any of our Indian dishes either of the north or of the south. She used to get quite thin in India, and invariably returned looking healthier after a visit abroad.

I can understand this from my own case. After starving on strict vegetarian diet for three whole years in England, I returned to India only 122 lbs. in weight. I must say, however, that in England I kept very good health and was scarcely ever ill and did not even catch cold, though all my English fellow-students as well as the lecturer kept coughing and blowing their noses as snow fell in plenty and the cold wind blew hard. I was then running my twenty-fourth year and was over 5 feet 8 inches in height. I *did* eat on my return, and amazed everyone by the amount I took. I believe my mother was quite frightened, but I was only making up for lost time, and within six months I was 172 lbs. at which I have kept steady since, for the last 26 years. So I have decided that food is a matter of habit, and though Mrs. Besant was scrupulously and punctiliously anxious to follow our system and eat our food, she never throve on that. She, however, took plenty of tea. I believe the afternoon tea used to be her principal meal here—as it was mine too in England—and she would take hot tea after her lectures also.

She was very particular about table manners, and gave me strict instructions about them. I quite see that she tried to follow our ways also equally carefully when in India. Perhaps that is why despite such close association with Mrs. Besant, my father never learnt any English ways either in dress or in food. He has always been very careful about his clothes, on which he spends much time and trouble. He has invented many new styles and cuts of *kurtas*[161] and caps also. But he has never put on European clothes. As to forks and knives, he does not know their

use at all. He likes a spoon though—and that with a vengeance—for he would sip his tea with a spoon (which would be bad manners in England) till he is almost half through his cup. He masticates liquid foods also! My father is almost as fond of coffee and tea as Mrs. Besant was. He got these habits from her.

When I was travelling with her on board the steamer, the food so disagreed with me and the prevailing smell so disgusted me that I rarely went to the dining saloon. I hated formalities, and did not care to change my clothes so often. I also felt giddy on that first voyage, though I was not actually sick. Once sitting next to her at dinner, as the ship rocked and I felt far from comfortable, I put my elbows for rest and support on the table. She immediately struck the elbow next to her with her hand, and I was told later that it was bad manners to rest one's elbow like that. Non-English readers may be amused to know that though it is bad manners to rest on a dinner table with the elbows, it is perfectly correct to spread out the fore-arms lightly on the table and rest them in that manner. The English people centre all their good manners round the table, and the strict discipline that English children get there, stands them in good stead in all situations in life. I have come to realise that a man behaves in life as he behaves at table; and if we Hindus are individualistic and observe untouchability, are unpunctual and slip-shod, it is largely because we dine alone, have strict canons of 'touch' and 'not touch' at meals, have no settled hours for them, and are invariably unpunctual there; and we just eat as we may, regarding food almost as an evil necessity, which must be

finished off as quickly as possible. The Englishman is very different in all these particulars, and so he is also very different in life.

MRS. BESANT'S COLLEAGUES

So Mrs. Besant gathered men and women around her for her work. They were of different temperaments; they came from many countries; but they fulfilled the tasks she allotted to them with rare devotion, for they constantly felt they were all doing her work, and, in serving the cause, they were really serving her. She was particular about the welfare of all who helped her, and all who were in any way connected with her. In her will, her personal servants, Lakshmana [162] and Bhagelu, [163] have received large annuities; and while she lived she used to take scrupulous care that the needs of all her workers, high or humble, should be satisfied as far as she could satisfy them. I can give no greater proof of that than this, that when my father suddenly became very seriously ill in 1905, she used to come to nurse him for whole nights in succession, after doing her full day's work. We were all very small children, and my mother was at her wit's end at the time. More than once in those anxious days we thought my father could not survive. Mrs. Besant had already booked her passage for Europe whence she was to proceed to America. She called many times in the course of the day to inquire after him; and till she left, every night she used to come to our home and relieve my mother and us and nurse my father herself. My mother and the children used all to sleep in the long verandah adjoining

the room in which my father lay ill. Professional nurses are unknown in our country outside the large towns even now: at that time they were absolutely unknown. I remember I myself could not sleep very well those days because of the hovering anxiety, and often found Mrs. Besant waking my mother in the middle of the night to attend to my father when she alone could attend to him; Mrs. Besant herself quietly standing in this interval outside the room.

Mrs. Besant left for Europe and then for America soon afterwards; and we received anxious inquiries by letters and cables from her from time to time. I have already mentioned how Mrs. Besant wrote to my father every week, and he to her, when she was out of India. She addressed my father in her letters in the most affectionate manner and in subscribing herself at the end of those letters, she used to refer to herself as 'Heliodore' which, I afterwards learnt, meant 'Given by the Sun'. In the book jointly written by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater called "Man: Whence, How and Whither"[164]—and this was written soon after 1911 when hopes were roused in Mrs. Besant and some of her colleagues of the coming back of Christ to earth in the person of Mr. Krishnamurti[165], a young boy of about 11, who had just been discovered—almost all persons connected with Mrs. Besant at the time were given names after the various stars. They were all supposed to have worked together in the ages past, birth after birth. Mrs. Besant is given the name of "Herakles", and Mrs. Marie Russak (now Mrs. Hotchener)[166] is called "Helios".

Though in the list given in the beginning of the book of the various characters of the story, my father is not

mentioned, the Capricorn of the narrative is he. My father is very argumentative as to things he does not believe in; and as Mrs. Besant and he had differed in opinion over this new cult in The Theosophical Society [167]—then known as the Krishnamurti cult, though later Mr. Krishnamurti himself repudiated all cults and even organisations—Mr. Leadbeater must have been rather upset at my father's strong public criticisms of the beliefs he was endeavouring to propagate and the incessant demand my father made for proofs of things said. I believe this book is more Mr. Leadbeater's than Mrs. Besant's, though I believe large portions of it were written by Mrs. Besant herself in Italy in 1912 where she had specially retired for this piece of writing; and with due respect I do not wonder that Capricorn should be referred to as having been 'cantankerous' even tens of thousands of years ago!

MRS. BESANT'S LETTERS

Coming back to the pleasanter theme of these weekly letters from Mrs. Besant from England and America in 1905, which I had to read out and the answers to which were written by me to my father's dictation, there are one or two points that are very clear in my memory. One was that week after week in these envelopes came a packet of used stamps of various countries marked "For Bhal". Bhal is the abbreviated pet name of my younger brother Chandra Bhal [168], who was an enthusiastic stamp-collector at that time. As Mrs. Besant had then no secretary that I know of, she herself must have taken the trouble to

cut out these stamps from the various packets and letters that came to her, and she sent them on week by week for my brother. Her post was always very heavy. Just as I find my sons, who are also stamp-collectors, asking my friends from abroad to send them stamps, so my brother and I must also have asked her for them, little realising what extra trouble we were giving her. She gave us stamp albums as presents and also post-card albums. In our old papers there are still numerous picture postcards addressed to Mrs. Besant which were sent to her as greetings from her friends and which she passed on to us for amusement and collection. Friends whom my sons have asked for stamps have sent them once or twice; the sons of my friends who have asked me for stamps have also got them once or twice; but it was something unique that Mrs. Besant should have sent these stamps—and large quantities of them—from week to week when abroad, and almost day to day when in India. I wonder if these incidents have anything to teach to those who seek to be leaders of men.

One week I remember the letter brought a big cheque —I believe it was for £1500. This was the proceeds from a single lecture of hers in America. Many cheques came from her those days, but this one stands out in my memory. The money was for the Central Hindu College, my father being the Secretary of the Institution. In the letter that came with this, she said: "If only every lecture of mine gave as much, the dear C.H.C.[169] would never be in want". She seemed always to remember all her work everywhere. With these letters also came press cuttings—

I wonder if they were Durant's[170] with which I myself became familiar long afterwards when I became a journalist and editor of a daily newspaper. These cuttings gave descriptions of her lectures at various places, and interesting descriptions they were. Punctual as she was, she happened to be three minutes late at a lecture in America, and this was duly recorded in one of those cuttings which I remember began something like this: "Arriving three minutes late, Mrs. Besant immediately went up to the rostrum and pressing three middle fingers of her right-hand on the table she began. . . ."

MEMORIES OF LECTURES

Mrs. Besant had not many gestures. The few she had were very characteristic. I do not know if any one ever remembers her speaking from the ~~left~~ right of the table. My memory is that she would always walk to the right even when seated towards the left, and almost always began her talk by pressing the three fingers, noted by the American journalist, on the table. A few characteristic gestures of hers I remember, otherwise she spoke just simply and straight. One was pressing her right elbow to her side and resting the out-stretched palm of her right hand on that of the left. Another gesture was—and that she employed at the height of her eloquence when periods rolled like thunder—spreading out both her hands, palms upwards, sometimes at right angles to her body, sometimes at 45 degrees acute, sometimes 135 degrees obtuse, and keeping steady at that for some moments. Still another gesture

was putting her right-hand index finger on her mouth right across the middle and shaking her body from side to side, or dramatically stretching the right hand in front with the index finger pointing to the distance, keeping the left hand hanging by her side.

A person who delivered so many lectures would naturally be expected to be hoarse sometimes. She never was. She never strained herself and so she never broke her voice. We politicians are often husky; but not she. Her pronunciation was so perfect and her voice carried so well that large audiences could hear her easily. If the audience was too large and the fringe of it could not hear her, I do not think she worried. If there was any disturbance during her lectures she never lost her patience: she just went on. Soon the music of her voice silenced the opponents; and even when they did not agree with her, they heard her with respect. Usually speakers are careless. Many go on drinking cold water as they speak, and some I have found drinking cold water even after their speech. She never required any water to drink while speaking; and at the end she certainly never took cold water, but hot tea.

She would not stand under a fan when she spoke, and to the last she never spoke sitting, and often I have seen her perspiring profusely as she finished. When my father travelled with her on her tours, he used to wrap her immediately after her lecture in a warm white woollen shawl, regardless of the weather and regardless of her perspiration. If she had to sit after the lecture on the rostrum, she would sit there with the shawl wrapped round her,

unconcerned at the heat. In the plains of India, even in the winter she used to get quite hot and wet with perspiration after an hour's speaking. This shawl wrapped round her throat and shoulders prevented her from catching cold. Curiously she often suffered from a slight dry nervous cough while at home, but never during a lecture except towards the end of her days. My father tells me that on inquiry he learnt from her that in her younger years she had a very weak throat and lungs but had to make public speeches all the same. A medical specialist advised her to go on with her public speaking and told her that it would either kill or cure her. She persisted and was cured of the weakness, but this little cough remained behind, incurable, which however did not hinder her work in any way.

So far as I can venture to judge of a matter like this, I am bound to say that she was at her best in the setting of the London Queen's Hall [171]. She would come punctually to the minute, go to the centre of the rostrum, put both her hands on a little wooden rest in front, and start her lectures straight away. There was no president to disturb, either at the beginning or at the end. The English audience is a quiet one and never very enthusiastic. Even students do not rise when the lecturer enters a room. On my first day at Cambridge when the tutor came into the class to give us his first instructions—various dont's and do's —I was the only person who got up, following the custom we have in India, and of course immediately sat down seeing that no one else was getting up. I realised that that was not customary there. At these Queen's Hall lectures of Mrs. Besant, I have seen the audience standing up out of

respect to her as she entered the hall. She left immediately the lecture was over. Some of her perorations there were really wonderful.

I have also heard her in the Albert Hall [172] in London, which is the biggest hall there with seating accommodation for 10,000 persons. It was a crowded meeting that evening (1912), at the close of a very long suffragette procession. The women's movement was strong in 1911 when I went with Mrs. Besant, and increased in strength during the years I was there. I saw this procession in which Mrs. Besant played an important part. Various women that took part in the procession were dressed after the great women of the past who had played their part in history. Queen Boadicea, Joan of Arc [173], and others were all there. I do not think Mrs. Besant was given any part that evening because it was obvious she was great in her own right. So far as I remember she wore the Mason's robes that day. Usually Masonic Lodges admit only men : but there is a Co-Masonic organisation in which women are also members. Mrs. Besant was a high personage in it. In Benares there used to be a Co-Masonic Lodge in the hall of which the meetings of the "Sons and Daughters of India" [174] took place. While Mrs. Besant was walking in the procession, some old workman called out : "Well done, Annie ; keep on, Annie." I learnt later that he was probably one of those who knew her in the old days when she was a labour worker and when it was quite common to use Christian names in addressing each other. She walked all the way in that procession, though she was 63 years of age at the time, and delivered a speech along with others at the end. The only

time I had heard Mr. Zangwill [175] was on that occasion. He was full of mirth and humour.

That hall has a peculiar characteristic, which those of my readers who may not have noted it before may note now if they have any occasion to be in London. While the lecturer is speaking, there is at some time or other during his speech, an answering echo from a portion of the hall in the form of a scratching like the grating of metal on metal. It is a circular hall; I was in one of the upper galleries, and the dais seemed to be far away from me down below as at the bottom of a well. In every other person's speech—and there were many short speeches that evening—at some time or other the scratching was sure to be heard. Mrs. Besant's speech, however, passed without this scratch. Some time later there was a talk on this subject at the lunch table of Miss Bright. If I remember rightly, Mrs. Besant explained that every hall has some defect which is exposed at a particular pitch—and only at that pitch—of a speaker's voice. A speaker must instinctively find out this defect and avoid that pitch. Well, public speaking is an art, is it not? Many of us are public speakers of a sort, but is there another like Mrs. Besant?

There is a description by Mrs. Besant of a lecture of hers in Australia. Readers may find it if they delve sufficiently in the old volumes of *The Theosophist*. I quote only from memory. She arrived at the lecture, as was usual with her, at the exact minute. The hall was crowded. The policeman at the gate said to her: "Madam, there is no room". I believe they are very strict out there, and every hall is licensed to hold so many persons and no more. "It

does not matter," said Mrs. Besant to the policeman, and tried to proceed. The policeman knew his duty better, and barred her way saying there was no room and that she could not go in. But Mrs. Besant replied: "Then there will be no lecture." The policeman entered into the humour of the situation, laughed and let her go. Is it not true that in life generally—in professions and everywhere else—there is always room at the top, as in the most crowded of lectures there is always room for the speaker, and on the dais too? Such is the tragedy and comedy of our earthly existence.

THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

Let me just add a word about the suffragette movement in England which was very strong during all the three years that I was there. At odd parties I used to meet women connected with the movement and sometimes heard their lectures in Hyde Park [176] as well as in other public places. I was greatly struck by their earnestness. Women had many grievances and they were trying hard to get them removed. I believe their great grievance at that time was that the wife [177] of the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, was not very sympathetic to them, and their attempts to interview the Prime Minister [178] were very often unsuccessful. That was also the time when a graduate lady threw herself in front of a rushing horse in the Derby [179] in order to attract the attention of the world to women's lot in England. She died soon afterwards in the hospital to which she was removed. I saw the solemn procession that went through the London streets carrying the coffin of this lady (1913)[180].

Another method adopted by the suffragettes to call public attention to their grievances was to break the glass panes of large London shop windows. Mrs. Besant was always keen on woman obtaining her proper place in the scheme of things, and though she did not support the breaking of shop windows, she supported the movement. There were arrests of prominent suffragettes and there were hungerstrikes and forcible feedings in jails. A cry was raised for their better treatment and Mrs. Besant also wrote some strong paragraphs in her *Theosophist*. Thus we see that the grievances regarding political rights and treatment of political prisoners are not confined to my country alone [181] !

It is a surprising thing that the demand of these suffragettes was only for the suffrage, *i.e.*, a right to vote for and be returned to Parliament so that they could influence the legislature to pass equitable laws for women. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst [182], and her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia [183], were keen suffragettes and suffered much for the cause. The latter started a weekly paper called the " Suffragette ", which was issued every Friday afternoon. I spent every Friday afternoon between lunch and tea at the University Union at Cambridge writing letters home and used to post these letters at the town Post Office just in time to catch the weekly mail boat to India. I always saw an elderly spectacled lady selling this paper just outside the post office at that hour and invariably purchased a copy from her. It may perhaps amuse my readers if I say that as a protest to the usual shop-keepers' system of having beautiful girls to sell their goods, the suffragettes posted perhaps one of the ugliest women they could come across, to sell their paper at

Cambridge. They wanted the students to be attracted to the cause by what the paper contained and not by the looks of the person who sold it.

One of the Indian lady students studying at the time in London was Shrimati Anasuya Sarabhai[184]. She was very keen on women's rights, and she used to be particularly wild at the treatment women received in India. She and I had many good-humoured bouts discussing the woman's problems. The suffragette movement in England could not have had a greater supporter than this lady, who herself belonged to one of the wealthiest families of Ahmedabad. I remember visiting the suffragette establishments in England with her and saw how high-born ladies would stand behind tables and counters selling suffragette literature. They found it difficult to do things quickly and make up accounts immediately as is invariably done by innumerable English women who bravely work in London shops and restaurants for an honest living[185]. But these ladies were earnest and worked for the cause at considerable—and judging from ordinary standpoints—unnecessary inconvenience to themselves.

LESSONS FROM MRS. BESANT'S LIFE

Mrs. Besant's life, on the practical concrete side, has, I believe, three lessons to give : take care of your time ; take care of your friends ; take care of your health. Numerous are the illustrations I have already given as to how she was a most punctual person ; and a punctual person alone can take care of his time. She did make 24 hours yield more

solid work than three times as many hours do to almost any other worker. She was constantly travelling; but she utilised all the time while travelling for her work. Though she would patiently wait for her train and appear perfectly at ease at railway stations, she spread out her papers as soon as she was comfortably established in the train. She wrote hundreds of letters in the rushing trains, and did much literary work besides. She always carried a large number of books with her. She used to be a great reader of papers, magazines and novels as well. She used to give a book to each of the persons travelling with her, and collected them all when the destination came near. One had to deliver back the book even if one were in the midst of an engrossing story! I believe she always slept well even while travelling in trains: that may be the secret of her stored up energy for heavy work in the day. There was almost always a settled sadness and seriousness on her face. She did not like slipshod work; and she insisted on things being done properly. When we showed any carelessness and indifference in going through some ceremonies that were prescribed for the meetings of the 'Sons and Daughters of India'[186], —an organisation founded by her for the training of young men and women in honest and straightforward service—she reproved us, saying: "Whatever has to be done should be done well. If we follow ceremonial, we ought to do that properly".

In any meeting Mrs. Besant would naturally be among the most distinguished; but she was scrupulously respectful to the president whoever he might be. At a meeting of the mock Parliament[187] of the Central Hindu College, she had

been invited to speak from one side. A student was in the chair; and as she entered she bowed very gracefully and almost too respectfully, to the student-president (the 'Speaker')[188] much to his embarrassment; and took the seat which he pointed out to her. She was given a doctorate of the Benares Hindu University[189]. She seemed to be as pleased at the time of receiving the diploma, as any boy could be who receives his first certificate of success at an examination. I have seen her introducing a lady student to the then Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu University, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar[190], for the grant of the requisite degree. She took off her academic cap and made a tremendous bow to the Vice-Chancellor. She did what even the Bursar[191] at the University of Cambridge did not do when introducing me to the Vice-Chancellor for the degree there: and they are particular about these ceremonials at that ancient University. All these gestures of hers were like those of a man; but she evidently knew the English Court etiquette prescribed also for ladies by heart. I have seen her making elaborate courtesies to the Viceroy, as the representative of the King. When I saw her doing so to Lord Minto[192], the then Viceroy, on his visit to the Central Hindu College in 1910, I felt that I was seeing a picture out of Dumas'[193] stories of the medieval French Court. This visit of Lord and Lady Minto was a very anxious one both because of the political and weather conditions. Untimely rain fell in torrents on the night before, and all arrangements made for the reception under Mrs. Besant's direct supervision, under *shamianas*[194], were spoilt. When, as a prefect[195] of the College, I got to the College early in the morning to see

what could be done, I found Mrs. Besant already there to look to the new arrangements which were scarcely complete before the Viceregal party arrived. However, every thing passed off successfully; and both the Viceroy and his wife had to scrape off a good bit of mud from their shoes on the foot-boards of their car before they could enter it. I believe Lord Minto was the friendliest of all Viceroys to Mrs. Besant personally and her work in India as well.

She had amazing grace, almost regal in its dignity, for special occasions. A large party was given by Lady Churchill[196] and Lady Lutyens[197] in a huge London hotel in 1913. I happened to be in London just before then and had gone to see Mrs. Besant. She asked me if I would be in London on a particular date, and when I said I would be, she herself gave me the invitation to the party that was to be held on that date and said I must come. Our hostess, Lady Lutyens, was surprised when I suddenly appeared at her party and was almost apologetic for not knowing I was in London and not sending an invitation to me. I jocularly assured her that I had not come uninvited as Mrs. Besant herself had given me the invitation; and we both laughed.

I had met Lady Lutyens in a curious manner. Soon after I went to England with Mrs. Besant, there was a Federation of Theosophical Lodges[198] at Oxford (1911). After the meetings, walking back to the hotel in the midst of a number of delegates, I found a lady walking by my side and speaking to me about India and Simla and asking me about myself. When I asked her if she knew India, she said she had been there as a child. I learnt from her that she was the daughter of Lord Lytton[199], Viceroy of India in the seventies of the

last century. I had read many books by her grandfather, the famous novelist, Lord Bulwer Lytton[200], and soon found common ground in talking to her about them. I often enjoyed Lady Lutyens' hospitality in London when I used to meet her delightful children. On one of these occasions—and only one—I met her husband, Sir Edwin Lutyens[201], later the architect of New Delhi. I had the pleasure of receiving her only once at my own house in Benares, when my father gave a party to Mrs. Besant at the time of a Theosophical Convention (1923).

At this London party, which was a very brilliant one, it was a sight to see Mrs. Besant, the white-robed chief guest of the evening, going from table to table and greeting the other guests and having a pleasant word for everyone, in all her stately dignity rivalling a queen's.

CARE OF HEALTH

So Mrs. Besant took great care of her time and took great care of her friends. Let no one think she was careless about her body. She took scrupulous care of her health. I do not remember to have ever heard that she was so ill as to drop her work or cancel her engagements, till towards the end of her life. Talking once to Mr. Polak[202], I found he was surprised to know that Mrs. Besant was a great horsewoman. But she was. At 60 she could ride as well as any person a third of her age. There was a fine black Arab horse—I believe it was named Sultan and was a gift to her from Dr. Balakrishna Kaul[203]—which Mrs. Besant used to ride. We have some pictures of her on Sultan ;

but I do not remember to have ridden out with her at any time when she was riding that horse. My memories are of riding with her when she was on a very fine mare named "Morni", meaning 'Pea-hen'. When Mrs. Besant was not in Benares she used to put that mare at my disposal and I rode it. It was a real pleasure to be on its back. I remember the poor mare dying. I was present at the death. Mrs. Besant was not then in Benares. Mrs. Besant was old-fashioned. She was very conservative in personal habits when we come to think of it. She never rode astride, though a large number of women had begun so to ride even then. She rode like the ladies of old, mounted on one side of the saddle. I do not know how she managed it, for we men are always told to "sink our knees in the saddle" when we ride. How ladies keep their balance and hold fast to the horse with both legs on one side I cannot understand. But Mrs. Besant rode wonderfully well.

She trotted and cantered and galloped and could be long hours on horseback. That was the only occasion so far as I know when in India she dressed in the usual riding habit of an English lady, including the head gear, and was not in white. I often rode out with her in 1908 and 1909. I was only 18 and she was 61, and curiously enough I would get tired before she did. On one occasion I remember she felt I was fatigued and said to me: "Are you tired, Prakasa? Shall we go back"? Sheer self-respect forced me to say that I was not at all tired and that she could go as fast and as far as she liked. I have met with many accidents while riding, and I fear I am very nervous

now, though only 50, when I am given a horse to ride. That "self-respect" which kept me by Mrs. Besant's side in those days, still keeps me on a horse's back if and when necessary. I used to be very fond of riding, though, at one time. My sorrow is that horses are now disappearing from public roads, and even the roads are now constructed of materials suitable for motor traffic and are very unsafe for horses' hoofs.

Riding is a manly exercise, and Mrs. Besant was very much a man. I never remember her knitting: I have always seen her with a pen in her hand. When Mahatma Gandhi's [204] movement of the *Charkha* [205]—the spinning wheel—began in India as a solvent (according to him) both of our political and our economic ills, I said to her once in the course of conversation that her mother must have spun, for textile factories could not have begun to function so widely in those early days. Readers will remember pictures of famous British ladies with a spindle. Fairy tales of the East and the West alike are full of women spinning and weaving. Mrs. Besant said to me: "Not only my mother, but as a girl I have myself been familiar with the spinning wheel".

At one stage of her political work in India, when she was closely associated with the Indian National Congress [206], and it was made incumbent on members of the Executive to supply a certain quota of hand-spun yarn, Mrs. Besant took to spinning on the takli [207], which she described as a 'twirligig' less than a foot long. Mahatma Gandhi sent his son, Devadas [208], to teach her how to handle the little instrument. I believe Mrs. Besant was the most perfect "gentleman" one can think of—the word "lady" is not

so expressive. A gentleman they say is at home everywhere. Mrs. Besant was not only so herself, but made everyone else who came to her, feel so; she did not make any one feel inferior to her in any way. She would talk seriously with a scoffer; she would discuss matters seriously with a child; she would be at home with poor and rich alike in any part of the world.

MOTHERLINESS

But she was a woman and a mother also, and knew domestic economy and domestic duties as any woman would. I remember her presiding over a meeting of the Central Hindu College boarders [209]. The Hindu College Boarding House was a great experiment. Mrs. Besant realised the value of inter-dining, and, though some of her colleagues were orthodox, she was able to manage to introduce inter-dining among members of the same caste [210], though even this brought the wrath of many ultra-orthodox Hindus on her head as the ruiner of the Hindu faith even though ostensibly working for it. At this meeting of the boarders, too, there was the usual report of activities and the usual catalogue of grievances. No meeting of students or perhaps any set of human beings at all can be complete, I believe, without this catalogue. One of the complaints was about the dust nuisance. Mrs. Besant in her closing speech told the students to throw used tea leaves in the air and then sweep the floor. That would abate dust. I do not know whether it does. I have never tried it. But I remember this prescription.

At this meeting the secretary in the course of his report had somewhere used the word 'native'. In those days Indians, that is 'natives of India', used to be referred to as 'natives' in railway trains and other places. I believe it is due to her that a protest was raised against the use of this word, and Indians came to be called 'Indians'. Words by use and misuse do undergo changes in their meanings. In those days, 'Indian' officers really meant European officers serving in India. 'Anglo-Indians' meant Englishmen who had resided long in India. 'Eurasians' meant persons of mixed blood, Indian and European; and 'natives' meant full-blooded Indians. 'Natives' was, however, a term of contempt.

I remember an article, "Rise of the Native", in an English magazine published in England, written by some detractor of coloured peoples there. I think my father gave a reply to it in the Central Hindu College Magazine, and naively asked whether 'revolt of the native' meant the revolt of Englishmen who were natives of the place where the article was written. I remember many quarrels with railway authorities over the use of the word 'native'. Compartments in railway trains used to be marked in those days separately 'for natives' and 'for Europeans'. All that is now gone. 'Natives' have become 'Indians'; 'Eurasions' have become 'Anglo-Indians'; and 'Anglo-Indians' have become full-blooded 'Europeans'.

In her closing speech that morning at this students' meeting, Mrs. Besant also said that the word 'native' should not be used. The poor secretary started turning the pages of the report in order to make the correction then

and there. As he fumbled through the pages, Mrs. Besant casually turned to him and said: "It is towards the bottom of the third page". It was surprising that she should have followed the report so carefully and remembered even the pages where different words appeared. I do not know if any other President would be so careful.

Another word that has been disliked is 'vernacular' used for Indian languages. Mrs. Besant herself used it and saw no harm in it. My friend, Shivaprasad Gupta [211], corresponded with her on the subject, but she said it contained no reproach to the provincial languages of India. Recent Government circulars have, however, discouraged the use of the word. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his Autobiography [212], says it means the language spoken by slaves [213]. Lord Morley in his 'Recollections' [214] seems to use it for a local county dialect, a *patois*.

Another word I should like to see abolished is 'coolie' [215] for porters. I have come to dislike the word ever since I heard the late Lord Balfour [216] (then Mr. Balfour) say in the House of Commons that the English worker was not a Chinese or Indian coolie! That showed the word did not indicate an honest profession but was actually one of contempt.

Thinking of the Central Hindu College Boarding House of those days, let me record a mischievous prank of the boys. Mrs. Besant used to speak of spirits or disembodied beings. The boys hung bunches of keys from various windows on the upper floor and tied strings to them. At nights they used to pull the strings and then the keys would jingle all over the place. The boys would draw long faces and tell the authorities that there were perhaps spirits about the

place. Mrs. Besant herself made anxious inquiries and gave instructions to the boys as to what to do and what not to do when spirits were abroad. Pandit Cheda Lal was the superintendent of the Boarding House—and a very strict disciplinarian he was; but the boys could hoodwink even him though he assured them all that he knew boys well and could never be taken in by any of them, however clever!

She always spoke strongly for physical exercise and encouraged students everywhere to take to it. There used to be many quarrels between Europeans and Indians in railway trains [217] during those days, and she felt that boxing alone could save us. I believe my father was for jiu-jitsu, the Japanese exercise, that was made familiar to us during the Russo-Japanese War (1905) [218]. There was an annual meeting of the Central Hindu College in 1909 and one of the old boys was coming to attend it from Calcutta. He was a short thin Bengali young man of aristocratic birth. He had been bullied out of his compartment—a second class—by a European fellow passenger on his way [219]. He had spoken about it to Mrs. Besant and she was angry. She wrote a very strong article in the Central Hindu College Magazine, which brought upon the college and its authorities the wrath of the local Government [220]. The Lieutenant-Governor [221] of the Province at the time was Sir John Hewett [222]; and he wrote to the Commissioner in Benares [223] to call members of the Managing Committee and tell them of his displeasure.

To invite persons only to insult them used to be pleasant pastime of high officials in India [224]. Those were difficult days. There were student movements all over the land; and various

circulars had been issued enjoining 'loyalty' on staff and students. I believe the meeting of the Commissioner with the authorities was not very pleasant. Mr. Arundale was full of fun even then, and told the Commissioner that it would be best to have a sliding scale of loyalties, the highest educational authorities pledging loyalty to the King and the lowest to the Commissioner! Nothing really happened and the episode ended with mutual threats and thanks.

Long afterwards, after retiring from Government service, Sir John Hewett came to India as an agent of some business company. He happened to meet my father at the Benares Cantonment railway station as he was passing, and my father had gone to receive someone else. Sir John, recognising him, said half apologetically: "You must be hating me, as I was not very friendly to your college," and made inquiries about the institution. My father told him: "The college is flourishing, and has grown into a University, thank you; and as to hating, that was rather the other way round, according to what you have yourself said, just now!"

MRS. BESANT'S GAMES

Besides riding, Mrs. Besant excelled at croquet. As a little boy I had played croquet and never knew Mrs. Besant had played it too. I was with her while she was travelling in Scotland in 1911 and we were staying at a beautiful country house in Durie with Mr. Christie [225]. He had extensive lawns and after lunch there was croquet. Mrs. Besant and I were partners. She played with the enthusiasm of

a child and made the game a very serious affair. She had no "kindness" for her opponents. When she managed to croquet a ball it was difficult for the next person's turn to come. She would croquet all the balls, take a loop, croquet them again and take another and so on. When it was my turn and I happened to croquet an opponent's ball she would shout: "Sky him, Prakasa, sky him!"; and the balls went tumbling from end to end of that vast field and teatime came and the game was not over. She was physically strong also. At Gaya[226], hallowed by memories of the Buddha[227], there is a very high flight of steps over a hill. On one occasion Mrs. Besant went up the steps to behold the scenery around, from the top. She just went on and on without stopping; and sedentary lawyers, local members of The Theosophical Society who were with her, fat and unused to physical exertion, followed panting and stopping at place after place to gather breath.

I remember in one of her lectures she said: "I am a woman who never knows when she is beaten". It certainly was the case at croquet. She had invited me to a little place called "The Lodge"[228] in Esher, not far from London, where she had retired with her party for a change and quiet writing. It was a beautiful summer evening and after tea there was croquet. The lawn was small, very unlike the Durie one, and the loops were very near each other. Mr. Arundale and I were partners and Mrs. Besant and Mr. Krishnamurti formed the other side. Mr. Arundale began the game, woefully saying to me: "Prakasa, we are bound to lose". Curiously enough I happened to play well, and towards the end, as it was getting dark, I managed quite

accidentally to strike the final peg taking Mr. Arundale's ball also along with mine to it. We won. Mrs. Besant seemed almost annoyed. She said to Krishnamurti: "Krishna, we must play them again and defeat them". Mr. Arundale pleaded that it was really too dark for any further play. I was too dumbfounded at my success to speak. The play began again. We could not continue it much further as the twilight disappeared quickly and we had to go indoors.

INDIAN POLITICS OF 1905

As old memories rush to my mind I am finding it almost impossible to put the incidents in chronological order. I have found it easy to allow one incident to lead me on to a similar one even if that happened years afterwards, instead of putting memories down in the order of time. That is why I am going constantly backwards and forwards, and at this stage I intend to go back to the year 1905, the year of my father's dangerous illness as well as the year when Indian politics began to take a serious turn causing anxiety to all. I attained 15 years of age in August of that year, and all the memories are firm and fresh in my mind. My father had moved on to a new house[229] which he had purchased and named 'Sevashrama' ('The House of Service'), in April 1905, after the old ancestral house. This was near the centres of his activities—The Central Hindu College and The Theosophical Society. He was in splendid health when we came; but within ten days or so he was suddenly attacked by high fever and varied complications followed. The illness of my father, though it continued for many months, lost its edge

by the time Mrs. Besant returned from her European and American tour of that year.

Lord Curzon [230] was the Viceroy, and among his many wise and unwise acts was the partition of Bengal. At that time it created a tremendous furore ; and on October 16, the date on which it was effected, Hindu Bengalis all over the country decided to observe a day of mourning. They declared a boycott of British goods and encouraged the use of *Swadeshi* articles. They regarded this move [231] as a clever device on the part of an extraordinarily intelligent Viceroy for cutting the Hindu Bengal intelligentsia into two, and favouring Muslims at their expense. Sir Bamfylde Fuller [231], the first Lieutenant-Governor [232] of the then newly-formed province of East Bengal, openly said : " I am like a man with two wives ; one Hindu and one Muslim ; if the first is unkind, I favour the other ". He became very unpopular. Soon afterwards the story went round that Sir Bamfylde greeted some Indian students at a party in London and introduced himself to them. One of them mischievously called out loudly : " Are you the man with two wives, a Hindu and a Muslim "? No wonder the whole hall looked aghast and crowded round with amazed inquiries. The very circumstances in which Sir Bamfylde came to hold his office made him unpopular without any fault of his own. Something happened besides the adumbration of this doctrine of " political bigamy ", because of which Sir Bamfylde resigned, and his resignation was immediately accepted by Lord Morley [233], the then Secretary of State.

The partition was annulled in 1912 by a proclamation to that effect of His Majesty King George V when he came to

Delhi for his Coronation[234]. I am told that the western Bengal Hindus now feel that they would have been better off under the partition as effected by Lord Curzon. Their complaint is that as matters are now, Muslims are in a majority both in Bengal proper and in Assam. Under Lord Curzon's scheme at least in one of the provinces formed by him, namely Western Bengal, Hindus would have been in a majority and only the Hindu Bengalis in the portions of Bengal taken off from West Bengal and attached to the then newly formed province of East Bengal (including Assam) would have been the "sufferers" with a majority of Muslims in the population. Now, according to them, all Hindu Bengalis suffer because they are in a minority both in Bengal and in Assam. I have no desire to discuss the communal problem[235] here. I have my own opinions on that.

In any case, Hindu Bengal was very angry, and a terrific agitation was raised at the time which continued almost unabated till the partition was annulled. Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee[236], the great orator of Bengal, one of the foremost leaders of public opinion of the day, was in the vanguard of this anti-partition movement. I remember his perfervid eloquence when speaking on the resolution against the partition at the Benares Congress in December 1905. The Bengali students of the Central Hindu College that day (October 16, 1905) came barefoot to the College as a mark of mourning[237]. Mrs. Besant had come to know that there was going to be a demonstration of this sort. She had her own ideas of discipline and she was a very strong-minded person. She was always determined to see a thing through after she had made up her mind. There were

many Bengali members of the staff also, and she knew that all of them felt this matter very much. She did not know how things would shape themselves. She came to the College on that day and stood at the gate herself and sent back every student who arrived barefoot. She would have no political demonstrations inside the precincts of the College. She became very unpopular for a time, and was attacked in the press very vigorously. It was taken for granted that 'her true colours were now revealed'; that 'she was at best a representative of British imperialism'; that 'all her work was a mere pretence'; and so on.

We are all familiar with the language of controversy—and political controversy is the mother of almost the worst language that one can think of. She vigorously defended her conduct—she seemed to be herself fond of controversies and entered into them always with zest. Some say she was a proud woman. Madame Blavatsky is reported to have told her: "You are as proud as Lucifer". I have never seen this pride in her; because a proud person simply does not care what another says, and generally walks away disdainfully without answering his opponent. Mrs. Besant was keen on putting her own point of view to the persons who opposed her. I remember her vigorous address at the anniversary of the Central Hindu College that followed in which she said that politics were for the old and not for the young; and boys as high as this—and she bent low showing the height to be only about 3 feet—cannot be expected to know the merits and demerits of the partition of Bengal. It is for the elders, she said, to *practise* politics; the youngers must only *study* it. The controversy, however, raged round her. At

a meeting in the College, the Bengali librarian, Ashutosh Chatterji [238]—a versatile and almost an erratic genius—speaking in Bengali, irrelevantly introduced the partition episode. She managed to understand the reference and called him strictly and almost angrily to order, which confused the old gentleman very much indeed.

PRINCE OF WALES IN INDIA (1905-6)

The Prince and Princess of Wales—later their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary—were to come to India soon afterwards; and the Congress was to meet in Benares. The situation was severely tense; but Mrs. Besant held her ground. She had herself directly invited the Prince and the Princess to visit the Central Hindu College. I believe she knew the Princess—now the Dowager-Queen—personally. It was not easy for local Government officials to gulp down the fact that she could arrange this visit over their heads. I am sure that, owing to their general unfriendly attitude [239] towards the Central Hindu College—despite Mrs. Besant's stand in the matter of the partition of Bengal so far as the demonstration of the students was concerned—they would never have allowed this visit if the invitation had been sent through them.

Mrs. Besant had early realised the value of Swadeshi [240] for the economic regeneration of our country and she was pleading for Swadeshi. She herself wore Indian-made cloth, having identified herself with our country, which she always said was her real Motherland, and she used to visit every week a Swadeshi bazar [241] that had been organised in

Benares in the wake of the Swadeshi movement started after the partition of Bengal, and she would purchase many knick-knacks there. She was sufficiently interested in Indian politics even then, and in the condition of our countrymen abroad. She presided in Benares over a lecture given by Mr. Polak [242],—to whom India owes much for his work and suffering for our countrymen abroad, regarding the condition of Indians in South Africa,—and delivered a strong speech, and gave the first contribution in money herself at the meeting. She, however, wanted to keep students safe from all harm, and thought it best that they should grow up into manhood before plunging into active politics. She was very keen on character and hard study. These are important in every possible way to train the youth for proper manhood. Empty talk and unmeaning demonstrations without actual work were not to her liking, and were even alien to her nature.

Swadeshi was nothing new to me. An old Maharashtra teacher of mine, Pandit Hari Bhatta Manekar,[243] was a great Swadeshist, and had come under the spell of Mr. Tilak's [244] teachings many years before the partition of Bengal. He used to encourage me and my cousins, whom he coached for examinations, to use only Swadeshi articles, and very often brought dhotis [245] for us from the village town of Mau, where there are still a large number of weavers. It is an important little place in the district of Azamgarh, adjoining that of Benares. This support of Mrs. Besant was good for the Central Hindu College, for most of her colleagues as Theosophists were internationalists in the political and economic sense and became Swadeshists only under her

inspiration. I remember a speech in those days of Mr. Arundale, in the Nagri Pracharini Sabha[246] hall, when he said, putting forward the lapel of his coat: "I have got here only pure Swadeshi cloth"; adding with an amused smile: "It is all pure Manchester"[247]. His audience entered into the humour and gave him a tremendous burst of applause. They had been used to Mrs. Besant's use of the word 'Swadeshi' which meant Indian to her also.

I remember the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to the Central Hindu College very well. Because of the growing political agitation in the country there was much anxiety felt, and the local officials wanted to post police guards inside the College compound. Mrs. Besant had her own principles, and she took full responsibility for the safety of the Royal guests and would not allow governmental authority to intrude on the College premises. The school cadets were drawn up all along the route, and the College authorities had decided that they would surround the Prince and Princess so that if there was any mishap of any sort they should suffer first. The then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces[248] (as the now United Provinces of Agra and Oudh were then called), Sir James D. La Touche[249], had himself come to the College the previous evening, and gone round to satisfy himself that everything was all right.

The official arrangement was that the address on behalf of the College was to be given to the Prince and Princess as they sat in their car, which was just to stop for a moment (by the side of a large open quadrangle, surrounded on three sides with buildings, and on the fourth by a road), and

then go away. The car stopped. Mrs. Besant went up to the Princess and asked her if she would not alight. Pink of courtesy as English royalty has always been known to be, the Princess herself opened the door of her car and stepped out. The Prince followed. The casket with the address was put in the car and my little sister– Sushila[250]—a great favourite of Mrs. Besant, was given a garland to put round the neck of the Princess. This little sister of mine was scarcely 8 years of age at that time and the Princess[251] was a tall person. The Princess graciously bent her head a little to allow my sister to put the garland round her; and Mrs. Besant lifted up my sister to enable her to do so. The party stayed for a few minutes shaking hands and chatting and then drove away.

This was in January 1906. In December 1905 the Indian National Congress had duly met in Benares[252], had passed a resolution of welcome to the Prince and Princess after much opposition and many tense moments in the Subjects Committee, and had also strongly condemned the partition of Bengal. I believe all concerned heaved a sigh of relief when the car cleared the College compound without any incident, with the students rushing after it and giving the occupants a hearty send-off. The next morning Mr. Radice[253], the District Magistrate of Benares, came to Mrs. Besant's residence to invite her to the guest-house[254] of His Highness the Maharaja of Benares whose guests their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales were. Mrs. Besant left a request with the Princess for autograph photographs for the Central Hindu College, of His Majesty King Edward VII[255] as well as those of the Prince and Princess

themselves. These duly arrived later and were unveiled with much ceremony by Mrs. Besant and still hang on the old walls.

There is one little incident in connection with this visit that may be worth recording, as casting a sidelight on a beautiful trait of Mrs. Besant's character. The school cadets —little boys all—were lining the route. Mrs. Besant wanted one of them—I believe it was Lok Bahadur Sah[256], a very determined self-confident Nepali boy—to take his stand a little on one side as his presence just there was interfering with some other arrangement. She was going round looking after the arrangements herself just before the Royal party arrived. The little boy said quite firmly to this head of the institution at whose will everything was moving, that he could not obey her orders and that he was bound only to obey his commandant—another boy, by the way— and that she must speak to him. Another person in Mrs. Besant's position might have lost her temper; not so Mrs. Besant. She realised that she had made a mistake; she praised the boy; she apologised; and I believe the necessary alignments were made according to her wishes after she had conveyed them to the 'proper authorities'. They say 'no one is a hero to his valet', that 'familiarity breeds contempt', that 'no one improves on close acquaintance'. All these general propositions were falsified in the case of Mrs. Besant. Perhaps she was the exception that proves the rule.

ENGLAND AND INDIA

This descripton of the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to the Central Hindu College enables me, with the reader's permission, to dilate a little on Mrs. Besant's general attitude regarding Royalty and the relations between England and India. She was a very loyal person and she was devoted to the Throne. She wanted every one to be the same. She had great respect for persons born to rule. In fact she extended this respect even to Indian Princes, who are by no means sovereign authorities and whose status is very often the subject of critical speculation. The Maharaja of Benares of the time—Sir Prabhu Narayan Singh [257]—was a great friend of Mrs. Besant and a great patron and benefactor of the Central Hindu College. He was a fine gentleman and had much grace and dignity about him. Unfortunately his custom of receiving his visitors in audience was rather strange. He used to sit on a raised marble seat, and later as he aged, on a cane rocking chair, while the visitors sat on the carpet spread on the floor below. He received Europeans in another room round a large marble table, when all including himself sat on chairs. Mrs. Besant visited the Maharaja with my father one afternoon. They were ushered into the usual Darbar [258] hall. It appears that the Maharaja sat on this raised seat and Mrs. Besant and others sat on the carpet on the floor. I remember my father's talk with Mrs. Besant after this. Mrs. Besant did not seem to have minded it at all. She does not seem to have even thought of it. She argued with my father: " But, my dear, he is a Prince ". He, however, felt that, at the least, the same kind

of courtesy should be shown to Mrs. Besant at the palace, as was done to the British officials and their ladies. He wrote to the Maharaja's Chief Minister [259] privately, however, and at all subsequent visits to the Maharaja, Mrs. Besant was seated on a chair, at the marble table.

When Mrs. Besant had such consideration for Indian Princes, her respect for the Crowned Head of the British Empire must have been great indeed [260]. She often proposed that a member of the Royal Family should come out to India as the Viceroy so that the Princes of India may not suffer the indignity of having to take a lower place than a person of less exalted birth who comes out as the representative of English Royalty and thus takes a higher place [261] than these Princes, some of whom think they are descended from the Sun and the Moon[262], even though others are obviously creations of the disturbed times that followed the break-up of the Moghal Empire, and some have even been deliberately created for strategic purposes by the British themselves[263].

She was always keen also on India becoming a self-governing partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. I believe the first person who used the word 'Commonwealth' in this connection instead of 'Empire' was Mrs. Besant. She thought that India and England had been brought together for the good of the world, and that any breaking of their ties would spell disaster for mankind. I remember the opening words of the address that was presented to the Prince of Wales: they were grand and sonorous and in Mrs. Besant's own best style: "We feel the happy augury of these auspicious days that bring the august

representatives of the greatest modern Empire to the greatest centre of ancient Indian learning ".

WORSENING SITUATION

The days, however, got worse and the political situation deteriorated rapidly. The first bomb was thrown in 1906 and the C.I.D.[264] flooded the land. Anxious must have been the days for all those who were in charge of the young, for the young were excited. They were full of hopes and fears; they wanted to be up and doing. Mrs. Besant herself was nervous; and her visits to the College became more frequent and her talks to the boys more earnest. The Central Hindu College Parliament was founded by her; at its sittings ceremonials of Westminster were solemnly repeated [265] and free discussions were permitted. The idea of such Parliaments has caught on and they are now found at most colleges and universities in India. Soon afterwards she founded her Order of the Sons and Daughters of India[266], into which we were all admitted with great ceremonial, where we pledged ourselves to high and honest work, and where the elders vowed that they would not ask others to do what they were not prepared to do themselves. That was Mrs. Besant's method of harnessing youthful energy to good ends and making sure that people did not incite the young to go into danger from which they themselves kept away. We founded night schools for labourers. We students ourselves taught in those night schools and for some time I was supposed to have been the Principal of these.

In her talks during those days, she often spoke of Charles Bradlaugh and commended the methods of his work to us. She referred to him as " the dearest friend of my youth ", and spoke of him as a " poor man's lawyer," and told us of his strength, of how he pushed back the garden gate of some rich country gentleman who was encroaching on the public road—such encroachments are not done only in India !—and how strong physically he was, though he never recovered from the rough handling he got in the House of Commons for his bold stand against the dogmatic theology of his time which made it incumbent on all persons to take oaths on particular occasions. Readers no doubt know that the entire credit must go to him for the option now given both in law courts and legislatures to make solemn affirmation instead of taking oath to speak the truth or be loyal to the constitution[267]. All those who have conscientious objection to taking the oath have reason to be eternally grateful to Bradlaugh for his great work. I have myself often thanked him in my heart for it. For Mrs. Besant he remained the ideal of what a public worker should be, to the last of her own days.

Irresponsible governments will always look with suspicion at educational institutions ; such was the case, not very many decades ago, in Austria and Germany—perhaps it still is there ; and so it was in Russia. So it continues to be today in India. It is a case of what cannot be cured must be endured. We have all to grin and bear the misfortunes as they come. There was not much trouble in our College any way, because the personal relations between the staff and the students were always cordial, and the boarding-houses,

where usually such troubles rise, were in constant touch with the authorities. Mutual friendly converse used to let off steam, and Mrs. Besant's personal care and help in students' difficulties endeared her to everyone. Everyone trusted her.

A young man had been turned out of an official College in another town for having kept the picture of a Bengali revolutionary [268] in his rooms. Friends of his wrote to me and I brought the matter to the notice of Mrs. Besant. The young man was admitted into the Central Hindu College. It should be noted that the Central Hindu College was a purely non-official institution, and never accepted any money whatsoever from the Government, as financial aid, with Mrs. Besant at its head, though it was offered to my father, as secretary of the institution, personally, first by Sir James La Touche [269] and again by Sir James (later Lord) Meston [270], when they were heads of the Province. Today the young man is in fairly high Government service in the province. There was another young man who had been ordered to be whipped for his activities in a Bengal school. The irate father brought him out of the school and came to Mrs. Besant who admitted him in her College. Curiously enough that young man is today very high in the service of the Bengal Government—and in the education department too !

PERSONAL TOUCH

Not only in politics but also in other matters Mrs. Besant helped her boys. There was a young man who would

fail again and again in the examinations. The Principal, Mr. Collie [271], I believe, got tired of him and said he must go and try his luck in some other College. The matter reached Mrs. Besant's ear and she, like a very reasonable person, naturally thought that failure at examinations was not a sufficiently heinous crime to send a young man away. He remained in the College to try his luck again and, I believe, to fail again. Mrs. Besant had a great memory for faces—a great and necessary quality in leaders. This young man happened to pass Mrs. Besant as she was coming down the steps of the College one afternoon. I was very near. Mrs. Besant stopped him and asked him if his case had been satisfactorily settled. He said it was and thanked her. This was Shivaprasad Gupta, now the well known patriot and very generous philanthropist whose horizontally large size gave occasion to Mr. Arundale to indulge in a pleasant joke at a public meeting. As Shivaprasad came in, Mr. Arundale said: "Take a few chairs, Mr. Gupta".

Mr. Arundale has always been a very ready-witted person and his humour is always chaste and delightful. During Mrs. Besant's tour in Scotland (1911) when she was accompanied by Mr. Arundale, Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam—and I too formed a member of the party—we came to Dundee. My memory of it is that it is a city of great contrasts: beautiful natural Scottish scenery on the one hand, and chimneys belching out smoke from huge factories on the other. Mrs. Besant asked Mr. Arundale to show us round the town. We issued out of the hotel. Mr. Arundale hailed the first taxi and pulling out a crown from his pocket and handing it over to the driver said most nonchalantly:

"Give us five shillings worth of Dundee!" I do not know whether the careful Scotsman at the wheel did give us five shillings worth of motor drive. My own memory is that he gave us a quick spin round and very soon deposited us back at the hotel!

Then Mrs. Besant would also send little messages of cheer and goodwill to students who were ill and ailing. There were two brothers, Senapati and Gajapati[272], in the boarding house; they were very popular. Later they moved on to a house of their own. The balustrades of their new house were not ready and the elder brother tumbled off and came down three sheer storeys[273]. He survived but his legs were gone. He could never walk again. He was taken to the hospital, where he remained for long months. Here he received a letter from somewhere outside India from Mrs. Besant sending a word of sympathy and cheer. This young man, to the sorrow of all who knew him, depressed by physical ailments and serious domestic bereavement on the death of his wife, committed suicide some years later.

Another Principal of the College in the old days that comes to my memory is Mr. Collins[274]. He was a kindly Englishman, and it was the easiest thing in the world to get a holiday from him. Students are proverbially fond of holidays and he was quite popular. One of the funny institutions in north India is what is called a rainy holiday. Rain falls in torrents here during what are known as the monsoon months. They immediately follow the hot summer of about three months and practically continuous drought of about six; and though very welcome, greatly disturb normal work, particularly studies after the long summer vacation.

The idea is that boys ill-equipped with umbrellas and mackintoshes because of their poverty, should not be expected to come to their schools and colleges when it is raining as they are bound to get wet ; and if they have to continue in that condition for five or six hours, they are equally bound to get ill. Not unoften even in large towns one has to wade waist-deep in water on the main thoroughfares after a heavy downpour. The situation in the countryside is very much worse.

Mr. Collins would give us leave even when there was the slightest rainfall about the time the college classes began. Even if the boys were not at all wet, some of them would stand under eves or pipes and get purposely wet and appear like that in the prayer hall where attendance was taken and prayers said before the day's work began. These boys would sit in the front benches and ask for a holiday as soon as the attendance had been taken and prayers recited. Mr. Collins would feel their coats and finding them wet declare a holiday. I remember one year my father telling a colleague of his in the management of the College, how astounded he was to find that out of 365 days of the preceding year, 206 had been holidays for one reason or another during Mr. Collins' Principalship. I was at school when he was the Principal and had really no direct dealings with him ; but I remember him well, as in the very early years the schoolboys and the College students sat together for attendance and prayers. When the institution grew, they used to sit separately in different halls.

Mrs. Besant was fond of having first-hand information of the various facets of Hindu life. In those days *Sabhas*[275],

that is, gatherings of learned Sanskrit pandits[276], were common. At these Sabhas, pandits would discuss various knotty points. Sanskrit pandits unfortunately, as a general rule, though very learned, are not very cultured in the graces of social intercourse; they invariably raise their voices very high and discuss little problems of grammar or logic with tremendous vigour. The person who invites a Sabha gives as a parting gift to each of these men of learning, presents of cash and sweets and even shawls[277] if he is rich enough, as honoraria. These Sabhas were common in my family in the old days; both my uncle and my father have always been great admirers of Sanskrit and friends of men learned in the ancient lore. My father is a profound scholar of Sanskrit himself, and my uncle, though not so learned in the inside of books, was much more familiar, and of very many more, than my father with their outside. He had a vast store of information about rare Sanskrit manuscripts, and at his desire I had to copy out a whole rare Smriti[278] from the India Office in London, borrowed for me by my University authorities when I was a student at Cambridge, and sent it to him.

I remember one of these Sabhas at our ancestral house in the heart of Benares, to which the family invariably moved in the old days whenever there was any marriage or other important ceremonial was to be performed. There was a great gathering of learned Pandits of the time, and I remember Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gangadhar Shastri[279], a tall slim figure, holding his own in a vigorous discussion which I could not follow. Mrs. Besant was present and was attending to the talk most earnestly. Pandit

Gangadhar Shastri was perhaps the most learned Sanskrit scholar of his time, and it goes to the credit of the Government of India that it recognised his merit and gave him a C.I.E.[280], *i.e.*, Companionship of the Indian Empire, besides the Mahamahopadhyayaship[281]. Governments do not usually recognise and decorate the really deserving. This great Pandit, when first he saw Mrs. Besant was so struck at the sight that he instinctively and spontaneously cried out: "Sarva-shuklâ Saraswatî"—"(here comes) the all-white Goddess of Learning (Saraswatî)".

In the December of 1908 I was just completing my 18th year when I was married. I have seen in my father's old papers a pledge that he seems to have taken under the inspiration of Mrs. Besant, not to marry his daughters before they were through their 11th year and their sons before they were through their 18th year, and not to allow consummation of these marriages before their 14th and 21st years respectively. These ages seem to be ridiculous today; but they stood for much reform forty years ago. I had a letter from Mrs. Besant on the occasion. I have it still. I reproduce it below:

Telegrams: Theosophical Society,
Olcott, Madras. Adyar, Madras, S.

June 20, 1908

Melbourne.

My dear Prakasha[282].

Your father tells me that you are to be married this month and I must write to send you and your bride my cordial love and blessing. When you see more of the world and of the women of other races, you will learn to appreciate

more than you can yet do, the priceless value of the Indian wife, of her purity, her loyalty, her single-minded devotion. She has the disadvantage of a too limited view of life and of too narrow interests; but if, during your absence, your young wife devotes herself to study and learns to understand the larger view, she will be on your return, a real helpmate, a woman in whom your heart and brain will alike find rest and joy.

Dear lad, young India has a difficult road, between old thoughts and new endeavours. But it also has the splendid opportunity of welding together the old life and the new. In this country, where democracy has its way, and ignorant numbers rule, one feels, more intensely than ever, the coarsening and vulgarising effects on a nation of the masses wielding power before character and wide views of life have been reached. And they are not happy: they are rowdy and noisy, but discontented. I look to you as one of the young men who may do much for India if you can learn prudence without chilling enthusiasm, and keep a warm heart under the direction of a wise brain. May you grow into all that those who love you hope for.

Your affectionate grandmother,

Annie Besant

I think it is a very beautiful as well as a very wise letter. It came all the way from Australia. It showed her personal interest in a boy—both in his present and his future. It showed that she had made up her mind that she would see to it that I was sent abroad for higher studies. I doubt if I had any idea then that I would go out of India; but I remember that after this letter I did make up my mind to go

out at any cost. It shows how she realised the shortcomings of the Indian home and how keenly she felt that with a little care the home could be made better and brighter. It also shows how high in her esteem stood the Indian woman and how unfair we were in not realising her value. And it gives indications of her ideas about the future world and her appreciation of the shortcomings of existing political and social ideologies in the West in her time.

'HAPPINESS' AND 'FREEDOM'

I have said before that my father was very argumentative when an opinion was expressed with which he did not agree; but when the opinion was the same as his, no arguments were necessary. I was always an extremist, though extremism in India has now gone so far that I am almost a back number. I know this, that I was a source of anxiety to all who loved me and often argued with my father and received many rebuffs from him. I also remember how he earnestly counselled patience and commonsense when I fought with all and sundry at railway stations, because they used to reserve benches on the platforms 'for Europeans only', and I insisted on sitting on them. My father used to be very nervous and took me often to odd corners and reasoned with me. I believe he was really worried about my safety. So far as he himself was concerned, he did not hesitate to express his views and act in accordance with them whenever occasion so demanded. At heart, however, he was really always loyal not only to the British connection but to the British Government itself. He had much respect,

I think, for the English people also as such. He had served as a magistrate for ten years in his younger days.

He must have been a magistrate very much out of the way, for he has never visited Naini Tal [283], the recognised Mecca of all government servants of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the summer capital of the Provincial Government. When I was coming down with him from Ranikhet [284], on a motor bus so late as 1928, and passed the turning whence a road branches off to Naini Tal on our way to Kathgodam [285]—the nearest railway station for those hills—I casually said I was sorry we had not seen beautiful Naini Tal on that trip, though he must have seen it many times. He said he had never seen it at all. " Not even when you were a Deputy Collector " [286] ? I asked. " No ", he said. I do not know if there is any other Deputy Collector of the past or the present of the United Provinces who has not been to Naini Tal, on some pretext or another. Rest and recreation after hard work is one pretext ; recuperation of damaged health is another ; when the real reason is to secure some influence there to get a lift, to supersede some contemporaries, or to obtain a transfer from a less to a more desirable station. My father was always a very respected officer and never cared to secure any influence whatsoever for anything. Hopes had been held out to him of higher offices than were then usually open to Indians[287] ; but he decided to resign Government service, in order to take up the work of honorary secretary of the Central Hindu College, at the wish of Mrs. Besant. His resignation was greatly regretted in 'high official quarters'. Mr. Ross-Scott, [288] a Judicial Commissioner of Oudh [289], spoke of this

regret to Mrs. Besant, who mentioned the fact in *The Theosophist*. So my father never went to Naini Tal; and even today, more than 40 years after he resigned from Government service, if I happen to meet while travelling any of his contemporaries of the various districts in which he had served[290], and they learn who I am, they almost rush to embrace me, expressing the highest praise of my father's work and worth and lovingly relate incidents of his days in Government service.

My father still continues his devotion to the ideal of an Indo-British Commonwealth which Mrs. Besant propounded, and though times have moved, and even though he has taken part in the Congress movement to the extent of having had to go to jail[291], and though he has presided over a Provincial Political Conference[292], his attachment to that ideal remains. I have seen him shaken from strict loyalty only once when Mrs. Besant was interned in 1917[293] for her political activities, not even when he himself was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for declining to give security to keep the peace[294]! He presided over the meeting in the Benares Town Hall to protest against her internment and made a strong speech. I hear that Mrs. Besant was deeply moved when she read that speech at Ootacamund[295], where she was interned. I believe he has regarded almost all the later activities of the Congress under Mahatma Gandhiji's inspiration as misdirected in the absence, according to him, of any reasonably clear definition of the economic and other policies of that Swaraj which he and the Congress desire for India; but Mrs. Besant's internment even he could not stand. I do not think he takes the ideal of national political

freedom at all seriously. To him they are—and philosophically speaking he is perhaps right—meaningless words. His ideal appears to be simple though doubtless fundamental. He wants happiness for all, and thinks that that can be best secured and ensured by good and wise men ruling for the good of all: to put it in his own words, he wants the rule of the Higher Self over the lower[296].

The problem of what is high and what is low remains, however, still to baffle our minds. It still clamours for a solution if there is one. Moral judgments in the best of minds may be perhaps only based on conventional conceptions of right and wrong for the time being, and it is also not impossible that unconsciously our own biases and personal circumstances may influence our judgment. The fundamental challenge of democracy still remains; even if those who regard themselves as 'good' judge from their own standards others as 'evil', should not these others so judged have a chance to say that the boot is really on the other leg; and that in any case they should have their share in administration and legislation so that their wellbeing may not be neglected, as they too have to bear the burden of taxation and to take their own heavy share in the carrying on of the world's work? They feel that they have reason to fear that the good, so-called, may suppress them completely, calling them evil, and deprive them of all to which they are legitimately entitled. Then Democracy's challenge goes still further. Its ideal is not to get mere happiness for all under benevolent despotism, even if that were possible, which it seriously doubts, but it wants everyone to be trained and equipped to take constant,

intelligent and effective interest in the affairs of the State, and be ever prepared to shoulder the burden and responsibility of office if necessary. Democracy requires everyone to be always ready to fight for freedom and self-government, and not to be satisfied with mere happiness as ordinarily understood. The challenge of Socialism is even more clear and serious.

I believe Mrs. Besant, with her own experience in the early years of strife and struggle, had at the bottom another sense of values than that of my father. I believe, though, that she often came under the spell of my father's logic and was affected by my father's learning and earnestness; and in the new-found idealism and in her quest for a new world of peace and goodwill, she agreed with my father when he talked to her of India's ancient thought and how the great Rishis [297] of old had solved the problems of life for all time; and how their solutions still hold good, and how the world could still be saved if the ancient remedies were applied to modern ills. I have personally no doubt that at heart she remained to the last what she was in the beginning, a true democrat and a truer socialist.

The ordinary man of the world—and I count myself no better and no worse—with his struggle and his difficulty, with his search for immediate solutions of immediate problems, with his impatience at idealistic theory and with his demand for concrete practical suggestions, asks: "Did the ancients solve their problems only for themselves, or did they do so for all mankind"? Are not their solutions confined to merely verbal quibbling however noble the language, however elevating the thought, when we look at the simple fact

that their own existence was made possible only because others had not solved those problems in their way and continued to live the ordinary life of the world in a manner contrary to the one prescribed by them. Verily the task of world-mending is unending, and at best an individual, however great, can do but little. It is something if he can even genuinely help himself.

So my father still continues to think in terms of simple goodness and happiness, even when he is fully abreast of the latest thought and doings of man in all the varied spheres of the world's activity, and surprises even experts by the extent of his reading and information on their own subjects. I once remember an out-and-out Marxist socialist[298]—who was all for Lenin[299] and Stalin[300]—utterly amazed, after a talk with my father at his actually knowing more of the subject and conditions in Russia than he himself did. My father's ardent desire is to be left in peace, and I doubt if he wants any very drastic changes in the body politic. His test is the cardinal test of happiness, which, after all, everyone fundamentally seeks. I do not, however, think after an analysis of both Mrs. Besant's thought and work that her standpoint was exactly what my father's is, and it is possible that sometimes her simple words in answer to simple queries were liable to be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

I remember an occasion when my father asked Mrs. Besant in my presence at our house one day whether people in Europe were happier than in India. "No", she replied. He was satisfied : he said as much. I was not. I felt then as a boy, and I feel still, that freedom is greater than happiness—we shall not quarrel about words, for the quarrel will

never end, and not only these but every word will have to be quarrelled over endlessly. Even at that time I was bursting to argue—but dared not. Though Mrs. Besant said what she did, I must say, with all respect, that after my own visit to Europe, I doubt if we in India are in any way happier —in whatever sense the word may be taken—than our brethren in Europe. A scholar and philosopher, however, like my father, with his traditions and various advantages he has had, cannot be expected to take the same point of view as regards political freedom and spiritual happiness as ordinary persons of the world. Mrs. Besant was not a philosopher in that sense, and her active life and work in varied spheres for human betterment are evidence that I can produce at least to my own satisfaction. We must also not forget that Mrs. Besant had more or less a comfortable and sheltered existence in India and her nearest contacts here were only with the well-to-do; and so she had less personal knowledge of our sorrows and difficulties than she had of the common people in England.

Miss Arundale, a great devotee of Mrs. Besant, aunt of her successor to the Theosophical *gaddi*[301], seemed to me to have had a closer touch with reality. I have a fear that my father was like many others who, not having seen Europe at first hand, have not altogether correct notions of things there as reflected in literature. We read of divorces in America; the even tenor of the life of happy families is not recorded in the daily press. One out here gets the idea that America is full of divorcees; and that almost every marriage ends in a divorce. In our condition of political subjugation and practical outcastes among nations, we, like all suppressed

peoples, feel an unholy delight when we read and hear of evils in others ; and regardless of the beams in our own eyes, look at the motes in others with microscopes which we feel they themselves have supplied, but which they in their turn use to expose evils among themselves with the desire of curing them, and utilise all their talents and endeavours to eradicate them. American families, so far as I can learn from Americans I meet, are also as happy as any can be ; and on the other hand there are heaps and heaps of divorces in India allowed and even encouraged by custom even though the law does not recognise them officially ; and there is plenty of domestic cruelty and unhappiness besides, to which we conveniently shut our eyes. We do not record them ; we do not care for them ; and we think they do not exist.

My father asked Miss Arundale once whether English families were happier than Indian. " The sum total of happiness and unhappiness ", the wise and careful lady replied, " is practically the same ; but the English happy family, she said, is happier than the Indian happy family ". This is perfectly true, because in a happy English family there is great sympathy and understanding between the wife and the husband who are true helpmates to each other, which they are not here, particularly in educated middle-class families. Count Tolstoy has truly said : " Happy families are all alike ; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way "[302].

SOME PROBLEMS OF LIFE

I should like to break off here for a few moments and discuss the problem that was very serious for me at that time and may perhaps be not without interest even now. Orthodox Hindus flocked in large numbers under Mrs. Besant's banner in the early days of The Theosophical Society, and my fear is that on the whole her influence on her Hindu friends was not very conducive to a true appreciation of social values. Mrs. Besant spoke enthusiastically of Hindu customs and found a scientific explanation for many that to the social reformer appeared positively bad and harmful. She doubtless brought back a pride for Hinduism at a time when scepticism was sweeping over the land ; that was certainly all for the good. I fear, however, very often she went too far, for many of our people started thinking that even their bad customs were good, and quoted Mrs. Besant as their authority. Times have changed. The conditions of life have changed. Men have changed with the times and conditions. Even my father's opinions have undergone change, though he does not think so. In the matter of marriage [303] and *pardah*[304], in the use of beads [305] and silks[306], in the matter of shaving the head on the death of a relative or the offering of libations to the souls of the dead[307], I find a great change in my own house, so far as outward expressions are concerned ; and my father is still luckily for us the head of it as he was decades ago. To many of us the dictum of George Bernard Shaw applies, inasmuch as we have come to regard those beliefs to be superstitious that have ceased to be our own.

Old Sanskaras[308], old habits and conventions of body and mind, however, are not easily changed, and I really believe that at bottom my father is still a very orthodox man. He has to adapt himself to changing conditions, as all wise men have to, if they are not prepared entirely to abolish themselves. If his writings are ruthlessly examined, I fear even when he is preaching the essential unity of all religions[309], his words are tendencious, and ultimately he feels the superiority of what he thinks were the old Hindu ideals of life and conduct, and makes earnest, elaborate, painful and even artificial attempts to read them into the teachings of other faiths also as a support to his own conclusions. At his present advanced age of 72, he continues to work hard from eight to ten hours a day, interpreting old thoughts; and it is truly remarkable that he has just brought out a book[310], containing some thousands of Sanskrit slokas, composed by himself, in an attempt to speak direct to the Sanskrit Pandits and give them his interpretations of the text of their sacred books regarding social organisation and tell them how they can save themselves if they like from the ruin that otherwise inevitably faces them. He is as much concerned as any Hindu can be at the diminishing numbers of his co-religionists because of conversions to other faiths, their mutual dissensions and their ever-decreasing influence on world affairs. My father is a man of very simple personal habits, and not many modern industries have reason to be grateful to him for encouragement. I think even the number of cakes of soap he has used in his life can be counted on one's fingers' ends, for he believes in giving a fearful rubbing with a wet towel to his body in his bath instead of gently

applying scented soaps to it. He has never purchased any sofas or padded chairs and has always believed in hard furniture. The appointments of his home, the manner of his food and clothing are all very simple and old-fashioned indeed.

One of the greatest achievements of Mrs. Besant, I believe, is to have got my father to do her work. He is not a person who would oblige anyone by doing anything readily at their desire, let alone bidding. But Mrs. Besant's work he did. He wrote books at her wish and helped her work in every way. If only my father had written in Hindi, his own language, he would have been read by thousands of his own countrymen who would doubtless then have enthusiastically spread his doctrines and thus attracted the learned of other lands, who in their turn would have eagerly translated his works. He largely wrote in English and wanted to appeal only to a select few in many lands ; he seemed to be satisfied by attracting the attention of a limited number of thoughtful people in forty countries of the world than millions in his own.

I was told by a friend who had spent some time with the great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore[311] at his University of Shantiniketan[312] that it was a matter of deep regret to him that my father has not been appreciated by his countrymen as he deserved to be, and he particularly blames us of the Hindi-speaking provinces to which my father himself belongs, for not having taken full advantage of his presence among them. Tagore himself is an outstanding example of how even an Indian of today, despite the political subjugation of his country and of the limitations

in which his life is cast, can bring his thought to the fore if he is great enough and writes in his own tongue. Tagore may have become a world figure after getting the Nobel Prize [313] for literature, but he was very well known in Bengal before then, and Bengalis were constantly on the lookout to compel the world to recognise him. Though my father has written hundreds of stray articles in Hindi, his main works are in English, and ~~so~~ his message has therefore been confined to very few, and has not been heeded by the multitude for whom ultimately all proposals for human betterment are directed. To me it is a pity that when he turned his thoughts to an Indian language he should have chosen Sanskrit, which, without meaning any harm, is really a dead language, instead of a living growing provincial language; and Hindi, which is his language, is by no means poor and has no reason to be ashamed of its history or tradition. It is the language which has been used by some of the greatest of the writers of all time[314]. It is possible he wrote in English also for the reason that he wrote for Mrs. Besant and wanted her to understand him directly and spread his thoughts herself throughout the world in her language.

In any case Mrs. Besant was able to induce him to write; but she was not able to induce him to travel. He has always hated travelling and so has not been able to get into personal touch with others, which gives greater inspiration and compels attention more quickly than a distant reputation for learning. Even today if any one would like to get at the root of his philosophy of life, he prefers to send them to his books than to give them a rough outline of his thought in

a short hour or so, and thus rouse their curiosity sufficiently to compel them to read his books. He has also never cared to attract persons who might attach themselves to him and form a group for the effective spreading of his ideas and the clarification of his views. Moreover, the books being in English—and the latest in Sanskrit—they cannot be read by most of those who seek spiritual assistance from him. And more curious than anything, though my father was closely associated with the greatest orator of her and his time, he was never induced to cultivate the art of speaking. He does not like to speak *ex tempore*, and all his speeches, whether at public meetings or in select gatherings or even in the Central Legislative Assembly [315], are and were most carefully and elaborately prepared manuscripts, though it is an axiomatic truth that the spoken word is more powerful than the written one, at least as long as the author is living and can speak if he likes.

ORTHODOXY AND THEOSOPHY

I personally do not understand why in the old days Theosophists were so keen on supporting and upholding most of the old customs of the Hindus and giving scientific explanations of them, even when non-Hindu Theosophists did not really follow these in their own lives though they preached them in their books and speeches. Mrs. Besant used to be very eloquent on Hindu rites and ceremonies, and I remember to have got quite upset now and then sitting among the audience and listening to what I thought—I speak with all respect—nonsense. In one of her lectures,

when I believe she was talking of the offering of water and other things to the souls of the dead and how the same was very helpful, I said to Miss Willson who was sitting next to me: "I do not believe all that". Miss Willson was angry. No one could be a more faithful friend and disciple than Miss Willson. She was a very good friend to my family and very devoted to Mrs. Besant. She turned round on me, saying quite angrily: "Do you mean to say Mrs. Besant is talking fibs"? "I never meant that", I said, "I simply do not believe what she is saying". "In English that simply means", Miss Willson continued, red in the face, that "she is lying". Miss Willson was English and I am not. I cannot pretend to know the language well enough even now to understand the delicate shades of the meanings of English words: then I was very young besides. Perhaps my words could be interpreted as she interpreted them, now that I think of them; but I certainly did not mean all that; and I apologised.

The only explanation that I can find to Mrs. Besant's preaching of that time, was her intense desire to stem the wave of utter scepticism that was then sweeping over educated Hindu India, resulting in their seeing nothing but evil in everything that belonged to themselves and nothing but good in everything that belonged to others. All praise must go to Mrs. Besant that she roused an apathetic and sleeping people from their slumbers; revived in their hearts their fast-dying sense of self-respect and pride in themselves, their traditions and their past, and forced them to find their feet and seek their place among the great nations of the world. She was probably sure that the proper equilibrium will

at last be found between the two extremes and that all will be well in the end. Mr. Srinivasa Shastri [316] was right when, paying his tribute to Mrs. Besant after her death, he said that "if they named any three or four of the other great people in India, the sum of their achievements, the aggregate of the benefit that they had rendered to this country would not exceed what stood unquestionably to her credit".

MISS A. J. WILLSON

I owe much to Miss Willson, and I cannot forget that during my father's illness after Mrs. Besant had left for Europe in 1905 she was a most capable and devoted nurse for months on end. I learnt the art of nursing from her. She taught us how to carry out doctors' instructions, how to keep a chart, how to give medicines, read the thermometer, and a thousand and one details that a nurse must know. Later I earned the compliment from Mrs. Besant that I was a very good nurse. I hate nursing, and I hate being ill myself. Miss Willson used to give lessons in English to my mother which were all wasted on her. Another person who tried to teach English to my mother—also without success—was Miss Davies [317], afterwards Mrs. Ransom. Miss Willson and she lived in contiguous rooms in Shanti Kunj a long time and were good friends. Both of them kindly corrected my conversational English, all which correction was of very great help to me. Miss Willson knew German and French also, and once translated in English an elaborate and enthusiastic tribute that had been paid to my

father by a French writer, M. Andre Chevrillon, in his book [318] on his travels. I met this gentleman and had lunch with him when in Paris during the Christmas of 1913. He and his family welcomed me most heartily and I spent a couple of happy hours with them at St. Cloud, when he presented to me a volume of that book.

Miss Willson would allow no criticism of Mrs. Besant and was her faithful attendant to the last in her illness. The effect of that incessant nursing told upon her. She lost her memory almost completely, and she was a pathetic figure when last I saw her in December 1936, when she stayed with us in Benares: she could not recollect my father's rooms in our house in which she used to work for hours every day for months; not even her own portrait hanging there. Most sad of all, she did not recollect even 'Shanti Kunja', the house in which she lived with Mrs. Besant for many years. She recognised no one of Benares except my father to whom she had been a very good friend indeed. She constantly remembered 'A.B.'—the familiar initials by which Mrs. Besant was known and referred to by all her colleagues. Miss Willson died not very long afterwards. Mrs. Besant so inspired all those who came in contact with her that they themselves forbore from criticising her in any way; and even if someone made any friendly criticism of her, he was bound to rouse the ire of someone else in the audience.

I remember a scene in Harrogate where I was staying in the premises of The Theosophical Society's branch there (1913). Next door lived Mr. and Mrs. Hodgson-Smith [319], very old Theosophists, venerable with age and very respected. They had made a communicating door and would

walk in from their house to ours through this and spend an evening with us. Mr. Hodgson-Smith, though old, with a long white beard, was still agile enough to jump on to the sills of his windows and brush and clean the window panes himself, with his legs dangling inside the rooms and his back to the street, leaning out most dangerously. Once Mr. Hodgson-Smith began by saying: "Let us talk of Mrs. Besant; we all like her so much". He started giving some reminiscences, and there was a mild, dim, distant and very affectionate criticism of her in one of these. One of the ladies present, Miss Fuller [320], began crying. Tears ran down her face and she said: "I cannot stand any criticism of Mrs. Besant". The conversation was immediately turned.

I myself have been sufficiently under her spell. Not so very long ago I happened to be dining with a very high European official in the Government of India. I had spoken in the Central Legislative Assembly [321] of my association with Mrs. Besant in order to assure everyone, when I was criticising government, of my love for the English people as such even when I stood against the system of bureaucratic administration they had introduced in our land. This high official started chaffing me and made some insinuations against Mrs. Besant which he wanted me to confirm. I said to him: "I have played as a child in Mrs. Besant's lap, and I will not have that". The wife realised the indiscretion of the husband and turned the conversation very quickly, saying: "Mr. Sri Prakasa was only a child at the time, how can he know?" I do not think there would be many who are so free from criticism behind their backs and who have had so many unknown defenders as Mrs. Besant.

AN INCIDENT AT SCHOOL

I have already said I was not a very pleasant student at school or college for the authorities, and I was always getting into some trouble or other. The authorities, however, were good to me, and I always received the greatest amount of consideration and affection from them. Some of my fellow students, I fear, suspected that it was due to my being the son of the much respected honorary Secretary of the College and one of its chief founders. I personally do not think so, for the same consideration was extended to all, however much their inferiority complex might drive them to think otherwise. I am talking of 1907, when I was in the tenth or the highest class of the High School, and Mr. Arundale was the Headmaster. The student movement was strong in the country, and authorities were anxious. However they may have treated students elsewhere, the authorities of the Central Hindu College, under the inspiration of Mrs. Besant, were scrupulously kind and considerate, and took much personal interest in them, especially the more active-minded, who might be regarded either as 'naughty' or 'high-spirited' from different points of view. They attended most of the students' meetings and themselves addressed them. Mrs. Besant used often to visit the College and give lectures. She also had private talks with many.

My class had occasion once to quarrel with the Assistant Headmaster, Babu Shyam Sunder Das [322], who deserves all praise for his affectionate concern for the students, and for his unique services to the cause of Hindi [323], to which he has

given his whole life with rare devotion, battling against heavy odds, both private and public. I do not think I realised the value of the man as I do today. He had gone out of the class for a few moments, and as is not unusual, the students made a big noise in that interval. He came back and angrily inquired who was making the noise. The students used to sit in the alphabetical order, and as my name began with an " S ", I was seated on the last bench. He started asking one student after another as to who had made the noise. Everybody said he did not know. At last came my turn. I said, little realising what I was doing : " I know, but I will not tell you ". The teacher was angry and ordered the whole class to be detained after the school hours, a form of punishment then in vogue. Being the highest class, with a set of troublesome students, he detained himself as well to make sure that we really were detained, and that one of the junior teachers in charge of the detention class was not bullied by us in any way. The incident was over. I believe it affected Mr. Arundale, the Headmaster, and he seems to have consulted Mrs. Besant in the matter. He himself came round that evening to my house, to my surprise, to talk over it, and I think I assured him that it was all right and that I had no grievance. I also assured him that it gave me much consolation to know that both Mrs. Besant and he thought that I was right in not giving away any class fellow and allowing the whole class including myself to be punished. Some time later Mrs. Besant indirectly referred to this incident in one of her lectures in the school hall and commended the standpoint of the students.

When the academic year was closing, Mr. Arundale was leaving for England for a holiday. Many functions were arranged in his honour to bid Miss Arundale and him farewell. Miss Arundale herself was an ideal teacher, and used to give most illuminating lessons to the lower classes of the school. The main function was a send-off in the school hall and the unveiling of Mr. Arundale's portrait—presented by the students—by Mrs. Besant herself. I was put down as one of the speakers, and the self-same Assistant Headmaster, who was in charge of the school for the time being, wanted us all to show him our speeches beforehand. In my own speech, in the midst of praises of Mr. Arundale—and they were all well-deserved—I had also put in some criticism, which also, let me hope, was not entirely undeserved, for what human being is perfect, and as Lord Morley says in his "Recollections", the best judges of a man are his office assistants, that is, those who are under his control, his subordinates in some way or other. Mr. Arundale would be the first, I believe, to recognise that he is not perfect! And it was a good thing for us, his students, that he was not! A more human man it would be difficult to meet; and that accounts for his popularity wherever he goes. Babu Shyam Sunder Das insisted that I should take those portions off. I was equally adamant, and so I was dropped out. Mrs. Besant came to know of it, and a visit from her to my house followed. She went into my mother's rooms; and seeing her in the house I naturally ran after her. The usual ordinary inquiries about everybody's welfare followed, and then Mrs. Besant said to me as if quite casually: "What is the trouble about your speech, Prakasa"? I said: "There

was some objection to some words in my speech and I could not understand why there should be that objection." "May I see it?" she asked. I brought it out; and after reading it, she said: "I see nothing wrong". Then I pointed out the words that were objected to. She very nicely said: "Then why not take them out?" I had really no option left. How could one insist after that? The words were taken out. I was put down in the programme and the function passed off most successfully and gave joy to everyone.

It may amuse readers to know that one of the functions arranged in honour of the departing Headmaster, Mr. Arundale, was an address by the "D" club, a College students' amateur dramatic society with a donkey as its crest. The address began: "We, your fellow donkeys of the 'D' club. . . ." Mr. Arundale had just then given up smoking. He had been an inveterate smoker—specially of pipes—and he sported, like any Cambridge undergraduate, quite a number of them on the mantelpiece of his old residence "Gyan Geha"—"The House of Wisdom"—built originally for and named after Mr. Gyanendra Nath Chakravarty [324] by his life-long friend Mr. Bertram Keightley [325], who had been a colleague of Madame Blavatsky. This house was later purchased by Mrs. Besant, and together with her own house, "Shanti Kunj", contiguous to it on the eastern side, bequeathed to the Indian Section of The Theosophical Society housed further east. The whole now forms a huge compound. It was here that Mr. Arundale used to take great pains to prepare members of the 'D' Club for their prescribed parts in the dramas

that were staged and in which he himself used to take an important part. I believe some idea had got afloat that smoking was not good for the spiritual life, and so smokers at the Central Hindu College were giving it up. They started burning incence sticks[326] under their noses as a substitute, and this became a fashion also. Mr. Arundale took to eating a lot of cardamums[327] to give the necessary taste to the mouth in lieu of tobacco. So heaps of cardamums were presented to Mr. Arundale on the occasion of bidding him farewell.

I cannot allow the year 1907 to pass without a reference to Mrs. Besant's election as President of The Theosophical Society on the death of Col. Olcott. There was almost a storm over it. Mrs. Besant was finally elected by an overwhelming majority, and I remember a cable to my father that arrived late one night from Mrs. Besant herself, who was out of India at the time, giving an analysis of the voting throughout the world. My father was of course Mrs. Besant's enthusiastic supporter. Mr. Keightley had been suggested, I believe, as a candidate, whom, I understand, Mrs. Besant herself favoured and whom she asked Col. Olcott to nominate before his death; but the Colonel nominated Mrs. Besant instead, and she was elected and re-elected to the office to the end of her days.

DEEPENING DIFFICULTIES

The years that followed were all stormy years. The situation in the country was by no means getting pleasanter,

and educational authorities all over the land were having anxious times. In the Central Hindu College itself, besides the political difficulties, there was a protest amongst the students against the dogmas of the ancient faith that were taught to us. I was among the greatest critics and sceptics despite the fact that I got almost cent per cent marks in the examinations in 'religion'[328]. Mr. Arundale was very deeply devoted to Mrs. Besant, and his anxiety was great at my being so "irreligious." This anxiety was shared by others, and Mr. P. K. Telang was reported to have said: "Irreverence will make a moral wreck of Sri Prakasa". Mr. Telang was one of the finest gentleman one could think of. He was great both at books and at games, and became one of the most popular figures in the College.

It will always be a matter of deep regret to me that, long years afterwards, because of differing loyalties to political parties, I had to take a strong stand against him in election to the provincial legislature. The contest was hot, and the Congress candidate, whom I was sponsoring, won in the end. I believe this had a very bad effect on the mind of Mr. Telang. I do not know why that should have been so. I have myself lost elections and have continued to thrive after that. I believe his was a very delicate nature, and it was hurt more easily. He felt that his services were not appreciated by Benares. Some years later he died. Serious physical illness followed the mental upsettal after failure at that election. I have reason to know that Mrs. Besant was also deeply hurt. Domestic worries also intervened, and he passed away prematurely, to the great sorrow of those who knew him. I felt sorry to have acted against elders to whom

I owed so much in my younger days, and I should be unhappy indeed if even in any very remote and indirect manner I hastened the close of Mr. Telang's valuable life.

In those days I remember a conversation with Mr. Arundale at Shanti Kunj, in which Miss Arundale and he were also living at the time with Mrs. Besant. He was most affectionate, and he said that if ever I thought of joining The Theosophical Society, he hoped I would let him have the "privilege" of being one of my proposers. Curiously enough, though I had fought against The Theosophical Society's theology—if I may use that expression—in India, I was greatly drawn towards The Society when I was abroad. In distant places in France, Germany and England, I met much kindness from members of The Society, and I found that among them alone was India a country that was honoured and were Indians welcome. In her condition of subjection, no one else cared for either her beliefs or her people. Theosophists alone regarded Indians as brothers, and also regarded India as their spiritual homeland. That had great effect on me, and I applied to become a member of The Theosophical Society in 1912 when I was a student at Cambridge. Even so, I wanted to become a member of the Indian Section, and I wrote to Mr. Arundale if he would like to support my application in view of the wish he had expressed to me years before. He wrote back to say from India that he would have been glad to sign my form, but unfortunately was too far away. I do not remember who signed my forms, but my certificate of membership was signed by my father as secretary of the Indian Section and Mrs. Besant as the President of the Society. My

father was in the midst of a fearful public controversy over what I have referred to before as the 'Krishnamurti Cult' with Mrs. Besant. This controversy was shaking The Theosophical Society from top to bottom at that time. I helped to found a branch of The Society at Cambridge with Mrs. Pitt [329] as the president. Mrs. Pitt was a dear elderly lady, the widow of a Madras civilian, and lived at Cambridge with her mother, Mrs. Poole[330], a bright old lady looking younger than her daughter; both mother and daughter were very kind to Indian students, who gathered in large numbers for tea in their hospitable drawing-room. Mrs. Pitt often visited India also, and was deeply devoted to the memory of her husband. It was on behalf of this branch that I had invited Mrs. Besant to visit Cambridge. I realised only too well when abroad, the truth of what Mrs. Besant used to tell us, adapting an English saying: "He knows not India who only India knows".

The year 1912 was a very sad year for The Theosophical Society; and though I myself formally joined The Society in that very year, I feel distressed as I remember the articles I read in 'Theosophy in India'[331]—the official organ of the Indian Section—in the summer of that year, sitting in a projecting verandah of the upper storey of a house in Wurzburg [332], in Bavaria (Germany), overlooking a railway tunnel. These issues of the journal contained angry articles against the cult of the coming Christ by my father, who, as the General Secretary of the Indian Section, was ex-officio Editor of the journal as well. Mrs. Besant also wrote some notes in *The Theosophist* at the time full of sorrow and grief. I am in no position to judge the merits of the controversy; I can never presume to judge

Mrs. Besant or my father, and as to judging as between them the thing is simply unthinkable and impossible ; but I know that the two were never the same to each other again after those unhappy days ; and though personal affection on both sides remained, and though my father still kissed her right hand in greeting and welcome when they met, so far as the onlooker could judge the fire and the fervour had all gone and it seemed almost as if the heart-strings that bound them before had snapped.

Not long afterwards some 25 members of the new persuasion resigned from the Central Hindu College in a body, and they were the best and the most self-sacrificing workers of it. Some students also went out with them, and I remember receiving at the Charing Cross station in London some of those who proceeded to England after the parting. Messrs. Wodehouse [333] and Dalal [334] came from among the dissenting members of the staff, and among the students were Rama Rao [335] and Yadunandan Prasad[336]. My father had a hard time after the break-up to keep the Central Hindu College going and arrange for a formal handing over to Sir Sunderlal [337] and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya [338] who had founded the Hindu University Society with which negotiations had been going on for some time past for taking charge of the Central Hindu College. These new authorities were very different from the old ones in outlook and ideal, in temperament and method of work, in their appeal to their fellow countrymen, and the type of persons they preferred to work with. Mrs. Besant thereafter diverted her energies to other educational institutions and worked in other fields of endeavour.

So far as the parting between Mrs. Besant and my father was concerned, it was clear that it made a gap in the lives of both which was never filled up. However sad might have been the parting of the friends of the Central Hindu College, my personal sorrow was even greater—if that is possible—at the Central Hindu College losing its independent status. How I wish it had been possible for my father and such of his friends and colleagues who still remained with him to have carried on the College for a few more years. I have no doubt that those who later founded the Kashi Vidyapith [339], with its high ideal of never taking any assistance from any Government even if it were a Swaraj Government and never permitting any control by Governmental anthority, would have been happy to have amalgamated themselves with the old institution. This would have given great power to workers in the cause of independent education and would have helped them to carry on the traditions of the old College with great enthusiasm—and I believe success.

It is pleasant to recollect how my father was always held in the highest esteem by his colleagues. At one of the meetings at the Central Hindu College, Mrs. Besant presented him on behalf of his fellow workers a silver inkstand with a golden image of Saraswati. My father, when he got up to thank his friends, was visibly embarrassed. It is curious he can never make a social speech full of polite nothings, though he is admittedly one of the most cultured gentlemen one can meet. He could only say: "I hope when I dip my pen in the ink-wells of this ink stand, I shall be able so to write my letters that those who receive them will send larger donations for the College than I have received so

far". I took charge of the inkstand at the end of the meeting, and as I was coming home with it I happened to pass Mrs. Besant near the Theosophical Book Shop where she was standing chatting with friends. On seeing me with the inkstand she said: "This is the way sons steal their fathers' goods". "I have got this", I replied, "for years of selfless service", quoting the inscription on the inkstand—and everyone around us laughed aloud.

My father is an older member of The Theosophical Society than Mrs. Besant was. His membership certificate, which is signed by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky and is still in our possession, is dated the 4th month of the 10th year of the Society, *i.e.*, some time in 1885. Mrs. Besant did not join The Society till 1889. She graphically describes the occasion in the last chapter of her Autobiography [340], which is captioned "Through Storm to Peace". My father is very proud of the fact that he was an older member than Mrs. Besant. Mr. Bertram Keightley, Mr. Upendranath Basu, and he are among the oldest surviving members of The Society today in the world: Mr. Keightley is about 80, Mr. Upendranath Basu 79, and my father 72. Another highly esteemed, venerable and dignified figure of the old days in The Theosophical Society, who is still in our midst, is Mr. Hirendranath Datta[341], the well-known Calcutta attorney, philosopher and litterateur. He is about 73 years of age.

My father always delights in finding something which makes him feel 'older than the other fellow'; and so even when a person like Mrs. Besant, whom he loved and revered so much, is concerned, he points out that he is older than she was so far at least as the membership of The Society is concerned.

If someone is older than my father in years, my father will find out that he himself intellectually is as old if not older, inasmuch as he took his graduate's degree as early as or earlier than the other. I have heard him talking to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on one occasion. My father, who is fond of comparing ages, started doing so and it appeared that Pandit Malaviya was about seven years older; but further comparison showed that both of them had taken the graduate's degree at the University about the same time, my father having become a Bachelor of Arts at the exceptionally early age of 16. So many of us like to remain ever young—that saves us much trouble;—but not so my father, who seems always to like to feel old.

VOYAGE TO EUROPE

In 1910 it was finally decided that I should go with Mrs. Besant to England the next year. Mrs. Besant gave me a certificate; one was necessary from a respectable person who knew me well, for attaching to various applications. It was in this that she said she had known me for 16 years. When I said to her, it could not have been so long, she firmly replied: "It is sixteen!" Among the various nice things she said in the certificate, she wrote about me: "He is hot and impetuous, but generous and forgiving". Hot and impetuous I fear I still am at 50—but as to being generous and forgiving, I do not know what I was then; I do not seem to be that now anyway! My father was anxious lest these words might go against me. But Mrs. Besant said that certificates that contain only nice

things have no value! I have followed the same principle about her too in these pages!

Mrs. Besant booked her passages very much in advance. It was to be a large party consisting of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Arundale, Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam and myself. Mrs. Besant was taking Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam for education to England. Her idea was—which never materialised—to put them in Oxford. The passages were booked as early as September 1910, though we were not to leave till April 1911. Full of proprieties, Mrs. Besant superintended the ordering of the proper clothes, and I remember the agent of the well known European tailoring firm of Bombay, Messrs. Asquith and Lord[342], measuring me for various suits, and I was equipped in a very first class manner at enormous cost. Mrs. Besant always travelled first class first, and my single fare from Bombay to London by the P. & O.[343] steamer *via* Port Said and Brindisi, whence we travelled in Pullman cars to Calais and on to Dover and London, all first class first, cost me nearly Rs. 1000. This was the fastest mail route and Mrs. Besant always took that to save time.

Mrs. Besant visited our house very often those days to see to the other equipments that were being made for me. She would reject anything that was not absolutely comformable to the highest class arrangements of English life. The steamer by which we were to travel was to leave almost immediately after the B.A.[344] examination of the Allahabad University in which I was appearing that year. At the examination time, while I was staying in the Hindu Boarding House[345] at Allahabad, I suddenly developed very high fever.

I remember to have answered my philosophy paper during a fever at 104 degrees. I lay in my room more or less unknown and even neglected. Suddenly one afternoon Mrs. Besant visited me. That would create sensation enough, and the authorities after that called on me again and again, and even local gentlemen arrived to inquire after me, full of complaints that I had not informed them of my existence before ! Mrs. Besant gave me good advice as to what to do and what not to do during that illness with the examination on. When that was over, I returned to Benares, and almost immediately afterwards left with her and a large party, including my father, for Bombay, whence I sailed with her to England.

I was not at all conversant with the ways of putting on European clothing, and I remember Mrs. Besant's visit to my cabin on the first evening when she told me how I was to put on the evening dress for dinner. It was embarrassing ; but she was a grandmother to me, and I let her have her way, though I was very nearly 20 years of age. She would sit on the deck writing and reading almost all the time. She would amuse herself now and then with playing by herself the game of cards called "Patience". I had never seen this game before, and she explained to me how it was played. She was very patient in her play as in everything else. The *SS. Mantua*, by which we travelled, was a very crowded steamer at that time, as a large number of persons were going by it for the coronation of King George V which was soon to follow. I particularly remember the Maharaja and Maharani of Baroda[316], who often came up to Mrs. Besant for a chat with her. The

night before we reached Aden, Mrs. Besant delivered a lecture in the dining saloon on Karma [347] and Reincarnation [348] and such things, which were far beyond the ideas of the fashionable holiday crowd that filled the saloon that night to hear her. I saw my first English dance on board that steamer also; and saw many sports by which passengers while away their time. The most glorious sight, however, that I saw on board the steamer was the rising of the sun as if springing out of the waves, when I went on deck very early one morning for this purpose while the ship was asleep.

Mrs. Besant was greatly worried throughout the voyage about my food. I simply could not eat anything. I avoided going into the dining saloon practically all the time and used only to get some tea and toast, etc., from time to time in my own cabin. Once at table I ate only a number of potatoes. Mrs. Besant said: "Potatoes will make you fat but not strong"; but I could not be induced to eat much. From *SS. Mantua* we changed into a small boat, *SS. Isis*, at Port Said. There was a heavy swell in the Mediterranean, and all the day and night that it took to reach Brindisi I just lay quietly in my cabin. I was considerably relieved to get on *terra firma* in Italy and in a train for the rest of the journey. We were in the Pullman cars, and very comfortable ones they were. Large crowds used to greet Mrs. Besant at various stations, reminding me of my own country: human nature is the same everywhere, and the manner of expressing affection, admiration and respect of a crowd for their leader is also the same. These railway compartments had corridors, and one could comfortably walk from the engine to the guard.

Once when I was sitting in my own compartment moping and feeling homesick and solitary, she suddenly came in and taking me in a very warm embrace expressed her great concern at my eating nothing and feeling so sad. She encouraged me with cheering words and assured me that all would be well and that I would soon be getting into the way of things. Her sympathy, affection and understanding were something unique; those who have known her cannot be sufficiently grateful to her.

Mr. and Mrs. Leo[349], astrologers, who had come to India for the annual Convention of The Theosophical Society during the previous Christmas, also travelled by the same boat, and Mrs. Besant asked them to take me in for a few days in their own house in order to accustom me to English ways before I went on to rooms in a vegetarian home[350]. This home she had helped to found, and it was looked after by Mr. and Mrs. Whyte[351]. Mrs. Besant had reserved rooms for me there. Mrs. Besant and the rest of the party went on to Miss Bright with whom they stayed at 82 Drayton Gardens. I often visited Mrs. Besant there and had lunch or tea. She was a most considerate person, and would not trouble a servant if she could help it. I once saw her bringing her heavy suit-case down the stairs. She was to go out somewhere. I rushed up the steps to take it from her. Anyone in the house would have been glad to help her if he had only known. A friend had put a car at her disposal. She would tell the chauffeur every time she returned as to the exact time when he was to come next. She would not detain him unnecessarily and thus enabled him to have plenty of leisure for himself. I fear most masters try to get their

'money's worth' out of their servants by insisting on their being about the house even when not wanted. That was not her way.

Some of Mrs. Besant's Indian friends did not hesitate to entrust her with commissions which she faithfully fulfilled. Mr. Gyanendra Nath Chakravarty had given her a fashionable dressing-gown of his and asked her to bring another exactly like that. She had asked me to pack it with my luggage. Some weeks later in England she called for it. I had forgotten all about it. After some search I discovered it and restored it to her. I had packed it in my bed bundle as the most convenient place for it. Bedding, however, is not needed by travellers in Europe, as they find beds ready-made in hotels, boarding-houses, ships, railway trains, and even in private families where they may stay as guests. Unlike us in India, who receive and accommodate as many friends as may happen to come in, a host in England, even if a friend, would not be able to receive his friend if he has not a bed in the house vacant for him. My bedding remained packed after Bombay and was needed again only when I returned to India after more than three years; then I spread it in the train from Bombay to Benares. I believe she ordered a dressing-gown exactly like the one given to her by Mr. Chakravarty and brought it with her for him when she returned to India some months later.

CAMBRIDGE

Mrs. Besant's idea was to put me in Oxford, and she took me to Oxford when she was visiting the place. She had

already interviewed Mr. Arnold[352] at 21 Cromwell Road, then in charge of Indian students in England. She introduced me to him. He was far from enthusiastic about her proposal for me. During her visit to Oxford, she took me also to Mr. Pargiter[353], who was settled there doing some work in ancient Indian history, I believe, and was in charge of Indian students at that University. Mr. Pargiter was not enthusiastic either, and was full of complaints against Indian students, who, he said, neglected him; but he promised Mrs. Besant that he would let her know if there was any chance of my being admitted, in about three weeks' time. When I was with her in Scotland staying with Mr. Christie at Durie[354], Mr. Pargiter's letter reached her saying that there was no room in Oxford for me. Mrs. Besant was greatly disappointed. I believe she became anxious. Her host, Mr. Christie, coming to know of the situation, asked her if he could be of any help, as his own son was at Cambridge, and he could perhaps get me admitted there[355]. Mrs. Besant was grateful for the offer. Mr. Christie wrote to his son's tutor, who later desired that I should be sent to see him. Mrs. Besant entrusted me to Miss Arundale[355] and asked her to take me to Cambridge. I returned with Miss Arundale from Edinburgh to London, and Mrs. Besant continued her tour. In the meantime the result of my B.A. Examination was out, and my father cabled to Mrs. Besant that I had passed. Mrs. Besant was still in Scotland and she sent a telegram of congratulations to my London address, having put the letters "B.A." in my address itself so that the envelope of the telegram told me what the contents were. Armed with this telegram, I went

with Miss Arundale to interview the Cambridge tutor. Miss Arundale was a most careful, helpful, and affectionate guide. Mr. Christie's son[356] met us at the station and took us to a hotel. He arranged for the interview with his tutor, the famous Dr. Barnes[357], who became my tutor also.

Miss Arundale and I went up to see him. His exterior was exceedingly cold and forbidding, but, as I came to know only too well later on, he was a warm-hearted man, kind, considerate and friendly. I fear his exterior repelled many of his pupils—including English ones—and a Russian student[358], Chrouschoff by name, condoled with me at my having him as my tutor. Dr. Barnes was very kind to me though, and I have the most pleasant recollections of my dealings with him. He was a man of few words and finished business quickly. He told Miss Arundale that there was only one seat in his College—Trinity—available for an Indian, but it was reserved for either an Indian Prince or a Government scholar. If neither turned up, I could be taken. Miss Arundale ruefully explained: "My boy is neither a Prince nor a Government scholar". Miss Arundale had been a most devoted mother to Mr. Arundale, and that afternoon at Cambridge she went on to St. John's College where Mr. Arundale had studied, tried hard to meet Mr. Hart[359], a great friend and contemporary of Mr. Arundale's and then a lecturer at his college, and at last spoke to him on the telephone from the Union[360] as he was many miles away from Cambridge during the summer holidays. I had later a lunch with Mr. Hart, when he received me kindly as a pupil of his old friend, and knowing I was a vegetarian had just boiled cauliflower[361] both for himself and

me! He affectionately complained that Arundale had completely forgotten him and congratulated me on having been his pupil in India.

After six weeks of waiting, Dr. Barnes asked me to see him again, telling me that I could be taken. I made my solitary way this time to Cambridge, after taking further instructions from Miss Arundale in London, had an interview with him, and was admitted. I spent three happy years at Cambridge, the memories of which are indelible in my mind. When Mrs. Besant came to Cambridge, true to the tradition of English mothers, she wanted to interview my tutor and inquire about me. An interview was arranged, and she went up the old staircase to the tower in which Dr. Barnes had his office, and I stood below in the great court of Trinity looking at the face of the huge clock that has ticked away centuries of time, and always gave the most beautiful of chimes; and I looked at the green grass of the great court that undergraduates could not step on, but M.A.'s could walk across[362] with impunity; and I saw the pleasant fountain in the centre of this court.

Mrs. Besant had a long interview, and when she came down and I went towards her she called out enthusiastically: "Prakasa, you have a very good character, you have a very good character". I did not know exactly what to make out of it, but she went on repeating: "You have a very good character indeed. Your tutor was telling me all about it". I think the tutor was over-kind and over-generous to me. Trinity College was very different to the Central Hindu College. There was no trouble of any sort at Trinity:

the discipline was very strict; we did not meet many teachers. As I was a vegetarian, the tutor had kindly arranged for special dishes for me in the Hall[363], attendance at which was essential. I could not take part in college activities as I did at home. I was a very quiet student at Trinity and broke no rules. There was a rule that we were to come indoors by 10 at night. There was a small fine for coming in between 10 and 11 and a little more for turning up between 11 and 12. I had very few fines to pay because I was almost always in before 10. In fact I studied hard from 8 to 12 at night, and so not many fines had to be paid.

Once, unfortunately, after attending a Theosophical meeting at the Garden City of Letchworth, not very far away, during a coal strike, when trains were running late, I got back to the Cambridge station close upon midnight instead of about quarter past 11 as scheduled. There was no bus running at that late hour. The last horse tramway had been taken away from the streets of Cambridge in my time. The dear old horse was garlanded and the tram bedecked with flowers on their last journey. The bus had just come in to displace and replace them. I walked as fast as I could and even ran a part of the way. I got in two minutes too late. I was summoned before the Dean[364] the next day. The Dean, seeing my discomfiture, said: "Do not be frightened!" At this I plucked up courage and replied: "Why should I be frightened? I am not responsible for your coal strikes and for the late running of your trains. I had the tutor's permission to go to Letchworth and I did my best to get to my rooms in time". "Oh, is that it?" he

said; and nothing more happened. That was the only time I was summoned before a Dean.

Another rule was that one must dine at least five times a week in Hall. Despite all my tutor's arrangements I hated Hall, and so I always took a very heavy tea in the afternoons and a light supper about midnight in my own rooms, before I went to bed. I simply made my attendance in the Hall by shaking my cap at the marker[365] who was a remarkable person for remembering faces and names. He missed making a mark once. I did go to the Hall, but perhaps came away thinking I had been seen when I was not. I was summoned for this also before the tutor and had to explain.

I am not surprised, thinking of this record, that Dr. Barnes thought I bore a good character. He said to Mrs. Besant that he was a little anxious about my health because he thought I worked too hard, and did not take sufficient physical exercise, and was 'biting more than I could chew'—an unfortunate habit that I fear I still have. He was surprised when at the end of just three academic years I was able to take the Cambridge honours degree called the "Tripos" both in history and law, and also a barrister's degree in London. After that I hurried home to India by the first available boat. I was out of Benares for exactly three years, three months, and three days; and I have never been out of India again.

My father had entrusted all the needed money to Mrs. Besant; and she was as careful at accounts as at everything else. The following letter from her which I happen to have in my possession will interest my readers:

The Lodge[366]*,*
Esher, Aug. 15, 1911

My dear son,

I am paying Dr. Barnes[367] *£20, Mrs. Whyte*[368] *£8.15 which carries you to September 22, and enclose £29-19-8, the balance I have, so that your father can send further moneys to Mr. Arnold*[369] *or you, as he prefers. I am very glad all is arranged at Cambridge, Can you come down on Monday for a couple of days?*

I think you have been very economical.

Yours affectionately,
Annie Besant

There is an enclosure also in her own hand: a copy of her note to my father:

Nov. 10, '10...Cheque...	*Rs. 600*	*Nov. 10 & Feb. 11 Passage...*	*936/-*
April...'11...2... ,, ... ,,	*4000*		
April, 20, '11...from Prakasa notes ,,	*600*	*April 21, 1911, Asquith ...*	*1040/-*
	Rs.5200		*Rs.1976/-*

May 11. Balance...Rs. 3224/- In English £215/-	*Travelling ...*	*£18-10-4*
	Boarding & Lodging 18 weeks ...	*31-10-0*
	Cash ...	*10- 0-0*
	School of Languages ...	*5- 0-0*

	Grays Inn	
	books etc. ...	*100- 0-0*
	Cambridge fees	*20- 0-0*
		£185- 0-4
	Balance ...	*29-19-8*
£215-0-0		*£215- 0-0*

I have given balance to Prakasa.

In response to this, I went and spent a happy and quiet day and night at Esher with her. It is most surprising that she should have kept the accounts so carefully, and sent them on to my father, enclosing a copy to me in a formal manner. I am ashamed that she should have had to take so much trouble for me. It was very gratifying to me that she thought me economical, for not many Indian students are so, when they have their own money to do what they like with, in foreign lands. Still, the expenses were heavy enough, and I am not yet sure whether I was wise in spending all that money in fashionable education that has yielded next to nothing in results. My life seems to me to be such utter waste, when I come to think of it. Perhaps that is the lot of most lives : we all seem to pitch our expectations high and so feel disappointed at the end.

RETURN HOME

In 1914 I returned home. Mrs. Besant had paid a short visit to England even in 1914 and had invited

me to lunch before she left for India. I myself was soon to follow. Mrs. Besant has duly recorded the lunch in *The Theosophist*: "A pleasant interlude was welcoming to lunch Mr. Sri Prakasa, the eldest son of Babu Bhagavan Das Saheb of Benares, who has just been called to the Bar and has taken the B.A. and LL.B. degrees of Cambridge University. He goes back to the Motherland loving her the more dearly for his stay in England".

I thought the P. & O. was very expensive. Other reasons also prejudiced me against it, and though Mrs. Besant herself was faithful to the P. & O., with its motto 'Quis Nos Separabit?' ("Who can—or will—separate us?"), to the last, I booked my passage by *SS. Marienbad* of the Austrian Lloyd Co.[370], which gave better vegetarian food, was much less expensive, more comfortable, and less formal, being less fashionable. I arrived in India just four days before the Great War of 1914 began.

The Austrian Prince had been murdered after I had left Cambridge and London, which I had done immediately on taking my degrees in June 1914, but before I got aboard my boat at Trieste in Austria. I found the flags were half-mast there, as I went into the town, having crossed over from Venice, and having understood no newspapers as I travelled through France, Switzerland and Italy, though I got off here and there to see the sights.

Many fellow-countrymen, including the great Dr. Seal[371], Sarat Chandra Bose[372], and my old friend Apurva Kumar Chanda[373], came from England direct and joined the steamer at Trieste. From them I learnt that war was impending and the situation was serious. We all got safely to

Bombay, but our Austrian steamer was captured on her voyage back at Port Said, as the papers later reported. The P. & O. steamer that arrived that week was *SS. Salsette*, and she had had a very dangerous voyage, something having gone wrong with her engines on the way. The *Marienbad* had also received an S.O.S. from her in the Arabian Sea and was hurrying to the rescue when she was informed that all was well and that the necessary repairs had been effected. Mrs. Besant knew that I was due that week and thought I must have come by the *Salsette*. I received an anxious telegram from her from Madras soon after reaching Benares congratulating me on my safe return after such a terrible voyage. I telegraphed back to her conveying her my hearty thanks and respectful greetings and assuring her that I had a most comfortable voyage by the *Marienbad*. I was happy to be back home and they received me most kindly at the old Central Hindu School and College. Many of my teachers had unfortunately left after the crisis of the previous year, but I was happy to find my old professor of Philosophy, Professor Adhikari[374], officiating at the time as Principal and Mr. Taraporevala as Headmaster. Then I met for the first time another notable figure, Prof. De[375], who must be included among the old guard as his inspiration was also Theosophy and Mrs. Besant, though he did not join The ~~Society~~ College till 1913. He has just retired (1940) after giving 27 years of honorary and continuous service to the Hindu University and all his life's savings besides.

Mrs. Besant went to England every year that I was there, and I used to see her at 82 Drayton Gardens, the beautifully furnished and richly appointed home of her

hospitable English hostess, Miss Bright. Once I called on her in urgent need as I had run out of money. That was before my account was transferred by her to Mr. Arnold of the India Office. I could not see her as I was told she was busy and no visitors were allowed. I was upset; but I left a note. I got back to my own place, after visiting one or two other places, within two or three hours; and I found a registered letter waiting for me with a cheque. In England the post is delivered most promptly and punctually. She was a great letter writer. You could almost be sure of the time a reply to your letter would come. She attended to all her correspondence most punctually and punctiliously. I received replies to all the letters I ever wrote to her till 1927, when I did not receive the reply to one letter I sent. The last letter I had from her was in 1929 on the occasion of my father's 60th birthday. Her mailbag was always enormous, but I doubt if anyone has any complaint against her for not attending to his letter. She wrote everything in her own hand, even the most unimportant slips.

It was good that sometimes she closed her doors to visitors. We public men in India know to our cost how disturbing visitors are, at what inconvenient hours they come, and how long they stay. But she was always strict. In 1929 my younger brother, Chandra Bhal, happened to be in London, on a sight-seeing tour. Mrs. Besant was also there, and he called to see her. He met a similar fate. He could not see her. He left a note behind giving his address. She seemed to have replied immediately afterwards, but the letter miscarried and got back to her through the back door of the dead letter office. She posted it to

him to our Benares address with another letter telling him that she was doing so, as she wanted him to know that she would have been glad to see him. The earlier letter had contained an invitation to tea and my brother was very sorry that it should have miscarried.

MEMORIAL TO MRS. BESANT

Some time after Mrs. Besant had passed away, my brother, Chandra Bhal, started a movement for setting up a statue of her in the grounds of the Central Hindu College on behalf of the old boys, who owed so much to her. As the President of the Old Boys' Association, I wrote scores of letters to old boys whom I could recollect. The response was very poor—a great disappointment to my brother and me. Some were certainly very enthusiastic—Mani Bhushan Banerji [376] gave away a whole hundred rupees, far beyond his means, feeling he owed everything to Mrs. Besant. Ganpatrai Saksena [377] sent me a contribution unasked, having seen our notice in the newspapers. Mr. Dwarkanath K. Telang [378] helped greatly, and Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas [379] parted with a marble bust of her in his possession and gave it to us. We raised a memorial in the old Central Hindu College grounds, though not so fitting and imposing as we would have liked it to be. This was duly unveiled by my father, and stands there outside the portico of the main hall, in the midst of a small garden. We were all happy that Chandra Bhal took the matter up and succeeded in seeing it through. The pedestal on which the bust stands has some beautiful Sanskrit verses inscribed on it

in honour of Mrs. Besant, specially composed by Babu Kali Prasanna[380]. It remains a matter of deep regret to me, as to others, that the *alumni* of the old Central Hindu College—quite a number of them in well-to-do circumstances now—did not show more gratitude. One ought, however, to be thankful for small mercies, for did not the Greek philosopher utter a truth for all time when he said : " Ingratitude is man's peculiar vice ".

INDIAN POLITICS, 1914-18

In 1914 Mrs. Besant became an active politician and vigorously took up the cudgels for a drastic reform in the Indian system of administration. She had gone through a terrible experience just before, as she had to fight a very heavy lawsuit in connection with her guardianship of Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam, which she ultimately won in the Privy Council. Curiously enough, the lawyer who opposed her in the Madras High Court was Mr. (now Sir) C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer[381], who later became a close associate of hers in the Home Rule movement[382] and was General Secretary of the Congress when she was the President thereof. Mrs. Besant very chivalrously paid many handsome compliments to her opposing lawyer for his ability, and in a note in *The Theosophist* she wrote : " This brilliant young counsel should have a great career before him ". I had occasional correspondence with her in connection with articles I used to contribute to her daily paper " New India "[383], and weekly paper " The Commonweal "[384]. She printed most of these articles over my own signature, but used some of them as

leading articles for her papers also. She was a person of marvellous dynamic force wherever she went, and within two years of her coming into active politics, she was being vigorously canvassed for the Presidentship of the Congress at the Lucknow session of 1916, and was actually elected the President next year, in 1917, at Calcutta. She had undergone three months of internment during that year for her political activities, along with her colleagues, Messrs. Arundale and Wadia [385].

Let me pause here and take a bird's-eye view of the field of Indian politics during 1914-18, the years of the great World War as it is called, since thirty countries were engaged in it, twenty-six on the British side, and four on the German. That war shook the world from end to end ; but it is already being eclipsed by the war that is being waged today (1940). These years were also the years of Mrs. Besant's most intense work for India's political freedom. The war had thrown all Indian politics and politicians off their guard and out of gear. They did not know exactly what to do and how to do it. Politics and personalities go together the world over—in India even more than elsewhere. The liberals—the great leaders of moderate Indian politics—were for every assistance being given to England and support afforded to Government in every way. But Mrs. Besant suddenly came out with the slogan : " The moment of England's difficulty is the moment of India's opportunity ", which staggered the 'old guard', who became positively incensed when she started talking of 'yesterdays' and 'tomorrows' [386].

Her dynamic personality and the clear, strong, definite lead she gave, brought the young around her ; her Home

Rule League became a power to be reckoned with; and her "New India" became the most popular and influential paper. The offices of "New India" were in the city of Madras; and Adyar, the Headquarters of The Theosophical Society, where Mrs. Besant resided, was some miles away. It is interesting to note that at that advanced age—she was 67 at the time—not only did Mrs. Besant take up the stupendous task of editing a daily paper, besides doing all her other work, heavy enough as it was, but she also learnt motor driving, and used to drive her own car through the crowded streets every day from home to office. I have never myself seen her drive. I have only seen photographs with her at the wheel. She has praised her motor-car—not herself—in the pages of *The Theosophist* for the good work it had done for her. She was not a woman of any prejudices, and she utilised to the full all conveniences that science gave, for the spread of her own ideas and the fulfilment of her own mission. She used railway trains, steamships, aeroplanes, motor-cars, anything that came in her way, that could help the cause for which she stood and enable her to do her work easily and quickly. Is not that very unlike our own orthodox preachers, some of whom would not carry money in their pockets, and others would never use a vehicle for locomotion!

A most important convert to her cause was Jawaharlal Nehru[387], the son of Pandit Motilal Nehru[388], the great lawyer of Allahabad and the then moderate of moderates, who lived all too well in luxurious surroundings of the most up-to-date European pattern. Pandit Motilal Nehru seemed almost to say that India could not do better than imitate England in

every way, and that we would not be able to do anything unless Indians became Englishmen. People think to this day that his coming into extremist Indian politics, from the rigours of the sufferings for which—he was jailed again and again, and despite advancing age and declining health, he had to do much travelling and table work also—he died earlier than he otherwise might have done, was due entirely to his son's influence on him. I do not know. I knew Pandit Motilal fairly well. He was a very strong-willed and a very proud man, and when once he made up his mind, he simply did not care for consequences. Mr. Gokhale [389] died (1915) not long after the Great War began, and Mr. Tilak [390] had just come out of his long imprisonment (1914) and had started hammering as hard as ever before. Mr. Surendra Nath Banerji [391] and others were soon engaged in reforms and talks of reforms and working of reforms.

Suddenly burst upon the scene Mahatma Gandhi, with all the halo and glamour that surrounded him on account of his South African work [392], with his strange archaic personal habits, with his stranger notions of right and wrong, and strangest of all, his ideals of solving all the ills of mankind by unheard-of remedies [393]. Mrs. Besant and he came nearest together in many aspirations and ways of doing things. Only Mrs. Besant was more human, and Mahatma Gandhi seemed far away from the mundane creation.

Mrs. Besant herself had said somewhere that the only Mahatma she recognised in politics was Gandhiji. 'Mahatma', in Theosophical parlance, stood for Great Spiritual Beings [394]—those who looked after the wellbeing of the world,

whose chosen disciples the great leaders of The Theosophical Society regarded themselves. Dadabhai Naoroji[395] was too old; Sir Pherozeshah Mehta[396] seemed broken-hearted; and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya[397] was building up his Hindu University at Benares. Mrs. Besant, Mr. Tilak, and Mahatma Gandhi held the stage. Mrs. Besant was allied to Mr. Tilak sometimes, and to Gandhiji at other times. She seemed to be half for Mr. Tilak's standpoint and half for Gandhiji's. All the three, however, were too mighty and domineering to work together; each must have her and his own way, and the rift between Gandhiji and Mrs. Besant came early.

AN INCIDENT AT BENARES

At the time of the foundation of the Hindu University in February 1916, there were a number of lectures delivered by eminent people in, to me, the very familiar, Central Hindu College Hall at Benares. Curiously enough, I was again in charge of the arrangements for these lectures, and had the seats placed as I used to, when I was a student there many years earlier. Mahatma Gandhi was the speaker one evening and the then Maharaja of Darbhanga, Sir Rameshwar Prasad Singh[398], was the chairman. A galaxy of Indian princes wearing their jewels sat on the dais. Gandhiji started his speech in his well known deliberate voice. His sentences were short, his voice had a rasping sound that carried far. He was speaking in English. He spoke of India's poverty. "Princes, go and sell your jewels", he said, turning towards them. The audience was

'electrified'. Was it some Christ[399] saying: "Go and sell your coat and come and follow me". Then he referred to the terrible police precautions that had been taken for the safety of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge[400], who had come to lay the foundation stone of the Hindu Universiry. The town was flooded with the C.I.D., members of the secret police[401]. It seemed to be in a state of siege.

When Sir Sunderlal, Pandit Malaviya, and my father were going to the station to receive the Viceroy, they found as they passed our gate—our house was on the way—that our men were having a debate with a C.I.D. man who was trying to enter our house to post himself on the highest roof (which was just above the ladies' rooms) in order to keep a lookout thence. My father was angry. He stopped the carriage and told his companions: "You may please go on to receive the Viceroy. I must get down to protect my home". Things, however, were satisfactorily settled: the man went away to another roof not far away, and my father went on to the station. My Brother was in the College Cadet Corps stationed round the foundation-stone of the University, and I was in charge of a portion of the amphitheatre. My mother and my wife were all by themselves in the house. When our house too was not safe from such police attention—and if I may say so in all humility, my family had been one of the well-known families of Benares for generations, and my father by his lifelong public work and learning had won greater goodwill and respect for it from the people and had greatly added to its stature—the situation in the town can be imagined.

Mahatma Gandhi had come to know of all this and was rightly upset. He referred to these excessive police precautions and the hardships caused to the people ; and even went on to say—tactlessly as the world will say, or as his secretary and continual biographer, Mr. Mahadeva Desai [102], will perhaps say 'with devastating simplicity': "It were better that a Viceroy took the risk of being shot than that the innocent people of the town should be harassed thus". The highest local governmental officials were all at the function.

Mrs. Besant became restive as Mahatma Gandhi proceeded. She was a woman given to the strict observance of the proprieties. She was herself at the time a leader of extremist politics, but she seemed to feel that that was no place for the expression of such sentiments. She perhaps also felt that the speaker was using language capable of being misinterpreted. The audience was spell-bound : one could hear a pin drop ; but there was obvious disturbance on the dais. Mrs. Besant spoke to one or two distinguished persons near her that all that was not right. The matter was brought to the notice of the chairman, who was already feeling restless and nervous. Some person advised the Princes that they should not stay. The chairman stopped the speaker, and then allowed him to explain what he really meant. Gandhiji began, but was stopped again. Events then followed in quick succession and it is difficult to remember them. The audience cried to Gandhiji to continue ; he refused, saying he would obey the chair, and only speak if permitted. The princes left ; the chairman left ; the meeting ended in confusion. The local officials were even preparing to take some action against Mahatma

Gandhi, but wiser counsels prevailed and nothing untoward happened [403].

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

It was clear that Mrs. Besant and Gandhiji could not work together. Mrs. Besant joined hands with Mr. Tilak, whose name was as yet greater than Gandhiji's in Indian politics; whose programme was more intelligible; whose ideals were more practical. The Indian public had no direct personal experience and knowledge of Gandhiji. He was to them a legend and a mystery. At the Lucknow Congress of December 1916, Mr. Tilak and Mrs. Besant had their way more or less; the Congress-Muslim League [404] pact was also sealed, Mrs. Besant appealing to the Hindus to yield and sacrifice to their Muslim brethren for the country's sake. The Congress passed into new hands; the old folk were all ousted; new ones took their place. Mrs. Besant was interned for three months in 1917, and in December the same year presided over the Calcutta Congress.

Gandhiji's influence was, however, growing apace. An attempt was made to patch up the differences of old and new by making Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya the Congress President in 1918 at Delhi. He was a friend of everybody, was respected by everybody, was welcome in every society, and was never a man of very strong views one way or the other. Delhi, however, exposed the widening chasm between the various leaders. I remember an angry conversation between Mr. P. K. Telang and Mr. Sankarlal Banker [405] at a private house in Delhi, during the Congress

session (1918). Mr. Telang supported Mrs. Besant, and Sankarlal, who was closely associated with Mrs. Besant, along with Messrs. Telang, Jamnadas Dwarkadas [406] and others in the Home Rule League work at Bombay, angrily exclaimed : " Go on, Telang ! "

At Amritsar Congress, held in 1919, after the Amritsar massacre, the breach became complete, and Mrs. Besant retired from the Congress more or less. The Congress passed into Gandhiji's hands. The mishandling of the Indian situation by the British Government in India after the close of the Great War was responsible for the bitterness in the Indian mind ; and Gandhiji's understanding of the situation *vis-a-vis* the psychology of the people, much like that of Lenin in Russia, made him the uncrowned king of the land. Many of the greatest men and women of the country rallied round him : Mr. C. R. Das [407] from Bengal, Mr. Rajendra Prasad [408] from Behar, Pandit Motilal Nehru from the United Provinces, Lala Lajpat Rai [409] from the Punjab, the brothers Vithalbhai [410] and Vallabbhai Patel [411] from Gujerat, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari [412] from Tamil Nad (South Madras), Dr. Pathabhi [413] from Andhra (North Madras), Mrs. Naidu [414] from Hyderabad, Mr. Kripalani from Sindh [415], Dr. Ansari [415a] and Hakim Ajmal Khan [415b] from Delhi, also, the Ali Brothers [416], Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, as well as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad [417]—all rallied to his banner. Mrs. Besant was never reconciled to Gandhiji. I heard many of her speeches on politics after he had come on the scene ; she seemed bitter and unhappy. In one of her lectures she even referred to the Gandhi cap [418], wondering why it was so called, as she had seen it in vogue ever since she had been in India !

At the request of Pandit Ram Narayan Misra [419], the then Headmaster of the Central Hindu School, she unveiled a portrait of Gandhiji in the Central Hindu School hall, called the 'Sharga' hall, having been donated by a student of that name who died in a London Hospital of an accident. I was present. She seemed obviously ill at ease. She had accepted the invitation out of courtesy and Pandit Ram Naryan, as all his friends know, has an unconscious habit of putting people in embarrassing situations by his well-meant efforts at bringing irreconcilables together. She was painfully avoiding the use of Gandhiji's name, referring to him sometimes, as 'this eminent man' and sometimes as 'this great Indian'. It seemed to me that she did not like to call him 'Mahatma', and did not like to hurt the feelings of her audience either by using any other honorific designation.

CLASH OF PERSONALITIES

Mrs. Besant and Gandhiji were not happy with each other. If they could have pulled together it would have been all for the good of India; but both were masterful personalities, and collaboration between them was almost impossible. I believe she attended only two Congresses after 1919—at Belgaum in 1924, when Gandhiji was presiding, and at Calcutta in 1928, when Pandit Motilal Nehru was the President. I have already given some sidelight views of the latter. In 1924 she came in only for a few hours to Belgaum, accompanied by Shiva Rao [420], now an eminent, much sought-after and popular journalist at Simla and Delhi, and

Yadunandan Prasad, who died, like Nityanandam and Patwardhan, in America, all cut off in the prime of their lives.

Gandhiji sat in the rostrum at the Belgaum Congress, a little away from the main dais to keep a check on the speakers and control the audience. Loud speakers and microphones had not then come into the country. He stood up as Mrs. Besant entered the huge *pandal* [421] at the further end, and the audience stood up with him to bid her welcome. She walked to the dais and sat among the ex-presidents. I happened to be very near. She wrote out a note in pencil and addressed it " President " and handed it over to me. She recognised me at once in that crowd saying: " Prakasa, will you please give it to the President ". I went up at once to Gandhiji and handed over the slip to him. Gandhiji soon after stopped all proceedings and invited Mrs. Besant to speak, and asked the audience to give her a most respectful hearing. Mrs. Besant had become very unpopular in politics—that is the fate of most politicians—and she was often interrupted in her public speeches, though she remained herself undisturbed even if anxious and troubled. I forget what she said. My memories of her earlier speeches are keener than those of her later ones: but I believe it was all in the nature of a warning against the way the Congress was going.

Mr. Polak [422] happened also to be there when she was speaking. He also had only just then arrived, and sat near me. He had been a colleague of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa and had suffered handcuffs and imprisonment for India, and was also a follower of Mrs. Besant as a Theosophist. He had by then, however, allied himself in

politics to the moderate Liberal Party in India and was of their persuasion, though he kept his friendships strong with everybody, and was very sore a couple of years earlier when he had been refused permission by Government to see Mahatmaji in jail. After her lecture Mrs. Besant at once left for the station. She had made a very long journey just to deliver this speech, and the President was glad to give her an opportunity to do so. Her eloquence, however, was going from her. The old fire was burning low. She was already beginning to forget words of which she used to be a profound master; but her earnestness, her sincerity, her courage, her devotion remained the same to the last.

She was true to the country of her adoption, and served her in her own way and in accordance with her own lights till the end. I was myself discontented with her attitude in the latter years. On one occasion, during those years, she had come with Mr. Krishnamurti to have tea with us. I was very excited, and tried to cut into her arguments with heated words. She spoke quietly and then suddenly became silent. However strongly she might speak on the platform, in personal conversation she would never carry on any violent controversy. There she strictly followed the injunction of the ancients[423]; but her personal relations with her old friends remained the same.

Soon after my father's imprisonment for his alleged activities in connection with the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Benares (1921)—the Prince of Wales who later became King Edward VIII and had to abdicate his throne because of his marriage (1937)—she informed me of her coming to Benares for the Theosophical Convention and

sent us her sympathies in our sorrow and anxiety. I had sent my carriage to the station for her but did not go myself. The carriage did not return for a long time and I wondered. She had driven straight with Miss Willson and Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu to the district magistrate, and armed with his permission had gone to the Central Prison to see my father before going to her own home; and this after three nights and three days in the train travelling from Madras. She *did* love her friends. In the question and answer meeting at that Convention, she was asked by some tactless individual, perhaps too loyally inclined towards Government, why she had gone to see my father in prison when she was opposed to his politics; and the questioner got a fitting though courteous reply.

When we come to think of it, it might almost be said that Mahatma Gandhi, who had been the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress—and as such of a major portion of political India—since 1920, only intensified the programme that had been chalked out by Mrs. Besant in the days when she led the extreme wing in Indian politics. She seems in a way to have heralded Mahatmaji's non-co-operation. It was under her inspiration that almost the first person to non-co-operate from an official educational institution was Mrs. Shiva Kamu [424], later a sister-in-law of Mr. Arundale; and it was for Mrs. Besant's sake, when she went into internment, that almost the first person to throw off a title and a big one at that—was Sir Subramanya Iyer [425], an ex-Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, who made history by sending a letter to the President of the United States of America over the Indian situation. Sir Subramanya had also a row with

Mr. Montagu [426], the then Secretary of State for India, when the latter came to the country (1917) to investigate and recommend reforms almost as the direct result of Mrs. Besant's agitation. However much she may have opposed Gandhiji's movement and the direction Indian politics took under his guidance towards non-cooperation, she may be said to have started the movement herself even in its details.

THEOSOPHICAL CONVENTION

It was the strict rule of Col. Olcott that the annual Conventions of The Theosophical Society were to be held alternately at Benares and Adyar (Madras) and nowhere else. Mr. Dharamsi Morarji [427] of Bombay, the invariable Bombay host of Mrs. Besant, a most devoted follower of hers, an earnest Theosophist and a millionnaire-philanthropist, is reported once to have offered to meet all the expenses of the Theosophical Convention, including the travelling charges of all the delegates, if only an annual Convention could be held in Bombay. The proposal was turned down.

A large number of orthodox Hindus in the professions of law and Government service were attracted to The Theosophical Society by Mrs. Besant's inspiration and came to these annual Conventions. They felt proud of their own faith because a 'foreigner' was sponsoring it; they felt confirmed in their own superstitions because they found a 'foreigner' was apparently upholding them. I do not know if many of those retained their allegiance when Mrs. Besant took to extremist views in Indian politics! As a boy I used to be a

volunteer at the Conventions of The Society at Benares; and had to serve the crowd. They were very orthodox in their habits and very troublesome in their ways. In their opinions they appeared to me to be very timid. We volunteers had a hard time; for though the functions of The Society went off punctually and the delegate-members attended them punctually also—as Mrs. Besant would wait for no one and make exception for none, and in accordance with her strict instructions, first-comers were served first regardless of age or sex at her public meetings—they were always late for meals; and we boys, mere negligible volunteers that we were, could not get away much before midnight in these cold December weeks when the Conventions took place at Benares.

During the days when Mrs. Besant was closely associated with Indian politics and at the same time President of The Theosophical Society, the Conventions, however, used to be held where the Congress was held; and I remember these Conventions at Lucknow (1916), Calcutta (1917), Delhi (1918) and Amritsar (1919). At Amritsar Mrs. Besant broke from the Congress finally; and though she attended two more Congresses fitfully, in 1924 and 1928—I do not remember if she attended any others—she was really never of the Congress again. The Conventions then went back to Benares and Adyar. Mrs. Besant fulfilled all her engagements during these Conventions while seeming to be attending to Congress work also all the time. She was wonderful in the way she could do things. At the Amritsar Congress she went on writing letters and correcting proofs at the presidential table at which she sat next to the President, Pandit

Motilal Nehru. She was her own reporter for her paper "New India", for which she reviewed Lord Morley's "Recollections" in a running train.

AN IMPORTANT GATHERING

I should like to record here my memory of the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee [428] that was held in Benares in the summer of 1920. In December 1919 the Amritsar Congress had passed into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi, who had made an offer to the British Government for peace and goodwill despite the Amritsar massacre and the Punjab wrongs generally of the martial law days of that year. The Committee that had been appointed by the Congress to investigate the wrongs had presented its report, and the same also, curiously enough, was signed in Benares some months after the Amritsar Congress. There was, however, no response from the Government to meet the Congress demands, and the All-India Congress Committee meeting was called in the summer of 1920, also at Benares. Pandit Motilal Nehru, the then President of the Congress, had paid me a special visit to express his desire that I might take charge of the arrangements, which I gladly did. This Committee was particularly called so that a special session of the Congress could be held before the usual annual session scheduled to be held in due course in December 1920. A special session was regarded as necessary because it was felt that the first elections to the new legislatures that were to take place as prescribed under the scheme of reforms introduced after the visit of

Mr. Montagu, and the presentation of the report by him and the then Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford [429], should, in the circumstances, be boycotted by the Congress. These elections were scheduled to take place before the annual session of the Congress, and the verdict therefore of a special session of the Congress became necessary.

When I took charge of the meeting I felt that as the Central Hindu College and its boardinghouses were vacant owing to the summer vacations, I could easily house the members of the Committee and hold its meetings in the spacious rooms and halls of the institution. I had, however, counted without my host. The Central Hindu College had long before this passed into the hands of the Benares Hindu University, as readers will recollect, with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as its virtual head. I had no doubt that I would be able to get his permission for the use of these buildings for this purpose. My surprise was therefore great indeed when, despite my telegrams and letters, entreaties and exhortations, he not only declined to allow the halls of the old College for the meetings of the Committee, but also refused permission for the use of the boardinghouse even for the accommodation of the members. I was amazed and confused, and did not know what to do and where to go.

It was a job, making arrangements for the accommodation in private houses of members who were to come in large numbers from all over the country. That, however, I managed. The problem of the meeting still remained. As the matters to be discussed were to be momentous, I did not want to go to the municipal Town Hall as that place was too public. I therefore bethought myself of the hall of The

Theosophical Society, and my father was good enough to help me out of my difficulty by himself telegraphing to Mr. Purnendu Narayan Singh [430] at Patna, then the General Secretary of the Indian Section of The Theosophical Society. My father was greatly surprised at the attitude of Pandit Malaviya, who was himself among the foremost political leaders of the land and had twice already presided over the Indian National Congress.

I obtained the General Secretary's permission for the use of his hall for the meeting of the All India Congress Committee, much to my relief. The meeting was duly held there. Mrs. Besant came to that meeting from Madras. Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. C. R. Das, Lala Lajpatrai (who later presided at the special session that was called at Calcutta in the succeeding September), Mr. Tilak, Pandit Malaviya also, were all there. When Mrs. Besant came to us for her usual breakfast during this visit, I told her of the difficulties I had had in arranging for the meeting and how thankful I was to The Society for placing its hall at our disposal. She was glad that though the Congress was going away in a direction she did not approve of, The Theosophical Society, of which she was the President, had come to my rescue even at that juncture. I was duly grateful. It was a matter of deep regret to Mrs. Besant and my father, founders of the College—and to myself also as a very old boy of the institution—that it should have gone into such hands that it was not possible to get it for a national function and that even the request for its use by the founders themselves could be so unceremoniously turned down.

MRS. BESANT AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Mrs. Besant has described in vivid language her own coming into The Theosophical Society and her first meeting with Madame Blavatsky, in her Autobiography. Readers of that book will remember that she was given Madame Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine" to review by the famous W. T. Stead [431]. The study of the book changed her mind; and from an unbeliever she became a believer; and joined The Theosophical Society. That was in 1889. I had read her Autobiography while yet a small boy, and I was also familiar with W. T. Stead's "Review of Reviews" [432], "Books for the Bairns" [433], "Penny Poets" [434], etc. I had had a great desire to see him, since my childhood. While in England, I happened to be invited to an evening party at W. T. Stead's through some mutual friends. Mr. Stead was sailing for America by that ill-fated "Titanic" [435] and he gave a little party at his home just before starting. He died on that voyage. I have been told that he himself had feared that he would be kicked to death in the London streets for his heresy and unorthodox opinions. He was, however, destined to meet a watery grave at sea. At that meeting I saw him for the first and the last time. He was a remarkable and attractive figure; and I do not wonder that his relations with Mrs. Besant were so cordial.

I have already spoken of the storm in The Theosophical Society after the coming of Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam into Mrs. Besant's life. She was not a person to give up friends even if the friends gave her up; and she

fought hard for her colleagues. The split, however, sadly affected the Central Hindu College. The workers who followed Mrs. Besant left the College ; and my father found it difficult to manage the finances unaided. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's idea of a Hindu University had been taking shape[436]; a Hindu University Society had been founded by Pandit Malaviya, Sir Sunder Lal, Maharaja Sir Rameshwar Prasad Singh of Darbhanga and others, in 1911, and Mrs. Besant and my father also were members of that Society. The Government had made it a condition that the Central Hindu College should form the nucleus of this University if the latter was to be recognised by law. Pandit Malaviya had always fought shy of the Central Hindu College and Mrs. Besant, but now there were pourparlers, they were still going on after the internal split in the College in 1913, and I remember the visits of Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Sunderlal to my father at Benares soon after my return from England. Thus the College passed the more readily into Pandit Malaviya's hands, and it expanded into the Benares Hindu University.

MRS. BESANT AND THE HINDU UNIVERSITY

It is a sad thought for me and I may not dilate on it. To many of us of the Central Hindu College it will always be a sad thought as long as we live ; for the Central Hindu College stood for something else and unique. It refused all Government aid, while the Hindu University is receiving a great deal and ever clamouring for more. Such aid destroys

inevitably the vitally needed independence of educational institutions. The Hindu University is a great institution—a fine creation of a great man who deserves all praise and admiration for it. But the Hindu College is dead. I happened to be elected to the first Court of the Hindu University. Mrs. Besant and my father were there also. My father delivered a long speech, criticising many aspects of the Hindu University; but Mrs. Besant was against him who had been her right-hand and closest colleague in the building up of the old Central Hindu College and supported Pandit Malaviya instead, in the very hall both had built together. For me it was a curious sight; but Mrs. Besant would support the person whom she had once pledged herself to support.

That, however, did not mean that she was happy at the change. Mrs. Besant's notes in *The Theosophist* of 1912 and 1913 show how hurt she was at the way things were going at the University, and she particularly felt unhappy at Pandit Malaviya giving a pledge to a questioner of his that his University would have nothing to do with Theosophy. That led her, as the notes in *The Theosophist* testify, to the formation of the Theosophical Educational Trust and her proposal to found a National University. The arrangement, as we were all given to understand, was that Mrs. Besant and ten of her colleagues of the old Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College would be taken as life-members of the Court[437] of the new Hindu University. There was some confusion somewhere; and in the regulations as finally framed and passed, this particular item was not entered. They wanted to take Mrs. Besant on the Court any way, and so the rule was made that only Hindus could

become members of the Court except the first one. Thus Mrs. Besant and also Mr. Arundale could be and were all elected to the first Court. When their term of office expired, there was trouble about her re-election. I wrote to her a letter asking her if she would permit me to propose her name for re-election as a Hindu, for I took her to be one from every possible consideration. Here is her reply :

Telegrams : "New India",
'Standard', Madras. P. O. Box. 39, Madras, E.
Telephone No. 12. *November 22, 1920.*

My dear son,

Thank you for your nice letter.

I pressed on Pandit Sunderlal and more than once on Pandit Malaviya, the unfairness of ignoring the condition on which the C.H.C., its buildings and funds, were given over to the Hindu University. Both acknowledged it and promised to remedy it, but the promise remains unfulfilled. We elected the then President [438] *and 10 trustees as life-members of the Court. As I was English, my name was put in the schedule of the Draft Bill, but had disappeared from the Bill as passed. The name of the elected persons are in the Trustees' Minute Book. I believe there is ground for a suit, claiming back the land and buildings, but I have never wished to bring one.*

I do not think you can call me a "Hindu". I am one by belief, but not by birth, and I think parentage is an element in the name. My claim does not rest on that foundation, but on my share in building up the C.H.C. and the condition made when we agreed to hand it over and to make

possible the Hindu University. I have said many times that I cannot claim to be a Hindu, because of my birth, but am one in all but that.

Thanking you for thinking of me,

Yours affectionately,

Annie Besant

This is a characteristic letter. It is a delicate one. It shows how she felt the change that had come over the Central Hindu College. It shows her devotion to her old colleagues. It shows how anguished she was that a solemn undertaking was not fulfilled. It shows how grateful she felt even for small remembrances from folk who themselves owed so much to her. It also shows how she honoured the conventions of faith, and how despite her own personal beliefs she would refuse to force herself into a place whence conventions, however silly, barred her. I have preserved this letter among my most prized possessions. Luckily the University authorities, though they did not have the regulations changed sufficiently to bring her and her ten colleagues permanently on the Court, got them changed sufficiently to enable them to elect a non-Hindu, who was on the first Court as a member thereof, even afterwards. This was done specially for Mrs. Besant, and she, I believe, was regularly re-elected as a member of the Court to the last.

METHODICAL HABITS

How methodical Mrs. Besant must have been, and how careful even about little details! She once discovered

that some stray issues of *The Theosophist* were missing from her collection in the Adyar Library. She wrote in *The Theosophist* that they were missing, and asked if any friends could help her in replacing them. I found that I had complete volumes, in our private library, of those years; and I wrote to her offering to send the whole volumes because we did not need them and it would be best to have a complete set at one place at least. Here is her characteristic reply:

Tele { graph: Olcott, Madras
phone No. 663

The Theosophical Society,
Adyar, Madras, S.
Jan. 21, 1921.
Calcutta.

My dear Son,

It was very nice of you to be willing to spoil a volume of the Theosophist *to fill our need, but the single copies have reached us, so I have your kind thought and the volume remains intact. Believe me, dear Prakasa, that my feelings to you all are quite unchanged. Differences of opinion should not touch old ties.*

I hope to be in Benares by the Punjab Mail on the 26th and to stay till the morning of Feb. 2. Please tell your father, with my love, and say that I expect to be asked to breakfast one day.

Yours affectionately,
Annie Besant

She would be grateful even for small considerations: she would assure everyone of her continuing love; and she would not even forget to remind one that she must have her breakfast at the old place in the old way!

Mrs. Besant was really a very methodical person. On my way to England, seeing my luggage neatly tied, she told me: "I love neat packing". My father is also very particular, and it is the despair of his servants and his sons—the arrangement of his luggage—when he travels. Even for short journeys, his luggage is tied up long in advance. He does it all himself: it is no good any one interfering or offering to help. He would tie his bedding in specially made straps, and he actually measures with his span from the edges of the bundle to make sure that the straps are absolutely symmetrical and equidistant each from each. He himself had carefully packed my luggage for my European voyage, and so no wonder Mrs. Besant thought it was neatly tied. Her own luggage was always equally neat, tidy and compact.

WHAT AILS US?

In one of my talks with Mrs. Besant in the later days, I said to her: "You have been with us for over 30 years; you have given your all to my country all these many years; will you not please tell me what defect you find in us that prevents us from rising, that keeps us down where we ever were before"! She wanted to put me off—she was so scrupulously polite and so anxious never to hurt anyone. But I was not to be warded off. I had my way. She yielded and said: "Prakasa, I am sorry to say, you are not a generous people", and she continued to tell me—she did not mention names, but I could spot them as she spoke, for I know them all so well—how our leaders do not encourage

the younger people; how they try to put down talent in others; how jealous they feel of anyone coming up; how they spoil their own work by not taking steps to hand it on; etc. All she said was very true. I know this unhappy trait amongst us only too well.

A DOMESTIC LESSON

My first baby came in 1916. Soon after the event Mrs. Besant visited Benares. My father was not here, and she asked me to bring my wife[439] and baby to her at Shanti Kunj; and so my wife and I went with the baby and fruits and flowers. Mrs. Besant took the baby in her lap and I stood behind the baby's head. The baby turned its eyeballs backward as babies will, to see a familiar figure. Mrs. Besant told me never to stand behind a baby's head like that, for that hurts the baby's eyes; but always in front. Mrs. Besant knew all these things also. I have passed on the information to many careless Indian parents after that, with what effect I know not. In England Mrs. Besant introduced me to her son, Mr. Digby Besant[439a], a wealthy businessman, about whom Mrs. Besant said one day at table at Miss Bright's: "Digby is becoming shamelessly rich". I met her daughter, Mrs. Besant-Scott[439b], and granddaughter, Miss Besant-Scott, also at the self-same table. I met them only once or twice; and though with Mrs. Besant the bonds of our family were very strong, there were no continuing bonds between the two families as such, as would surely have been the case if both the families had been Indian.

My wife died in 1926. Mrs. Besant was in America at that time. The news was in the Indian papers. She always had Indian papers sent to her in weekly bundles when she was travelling abroad. When I had gone to England with her she used to get weekly bundles of the Allahabad daily, the *Leader*[140], and after reading them would send them on to me by post. She wrote from America a letter of condolence to me which I reproduce below. It is so movingly characteristic: so sweet, so beautiful, so consoling:

NEW HOTEL SHERMAN, CHICAGO,
Sept. 6, 1926,
S. Paul's.

My dear Son,

I am very sorry to hear that your dear wife has passed to the other side. It is a sad thing for a man to lose the Light of his Home.

Please give my loving sympathy also to your father and mother.

Always affectionately yours,
Annie Besant

It is a very short letter; but she made time to write this much at least. She was aging rapidly. She knew my wife so well; and she also knew what she had meant not only to me but to the whole household.

LAST DAYS

Mrs. Besant's last visit to Benares was at the time of the Theosophical Convention in December 1930 and January 1931. Mrs. Besant's mind was fast failing. I saw her twice

during that visit of hers. She did not remember many things; and when I said good-bye to her after the second visit—and that was the last good-bye—she said: "You will remember me to your wife, won't you"? Not to hurt her, I replied: "I will certainly". My wife had passed away more than four years before. Mrs. Besant had sent me a letter of condolence; and she had herself visited the vacant home many times afterwards; but she had forgotten everything. I came away wondering sadly what was happening to that powerful mind. She has gone now. I have no more message to receive from her, and that message she left for my wife has remained and will ever remain undelivered. She went away to Adyar never to come back again. Her memory—and memory is mind—failed more and more afterwards. She suffered greatly in those last days, so I learn from persons who saw her then. She was faithfully attended by Miss Willson to the last, and she left her body [441] when she was within twelve days of completing 86 years of age.

In her declining years, whenever she came to Benares she used to detrain at the Kashi railway station because she could walk from the platform to the waiting car without having to go up any steps or slopes, while at the more familiar Benares Cantonment railway station, which was her nearest station in Benares, there are the steep slopes of an overbridge to negotiate. This Kashi station stands right on the southern bank of the 'Ganga': Mrs. Besant abhorred the English form of "Ganges", always gave to the holy river its own indigenous name, and insisted on everyone else doing the same. An old friend, Damodar Prasad[442], Headmaster of her Theosophical School in Benares, told me once that as

he was bringing away Mrs. Besant from the Kashi station on one occasion, and she saw the river, she said: "Bhagavan Das has often promised that he would cremate me here in Benares on the banks of the Ganga. I do not think, though, he will be able to do so". This seems to be almost like the wish of an old Hindu woman wanting to be cremated in Kashi [443] on the banks of the sacred Ganga and at the hands of her best loved son. She died in Adyar, and so my father to his great sorrow could not assist at the obsequies.

I happened to be at Lucknow at the time of her passing. I was presiding over a meeting of Congressmen that had been hastily summoned by Jawaharlal Nehru to take counsel together on the political situation, after his sudden release from jail on account of his wife's [444] serious illness. A colleague, Har Prasad Saksena[445], suddenly said, as the meeting was proceeding, that they should adjourn as a mark of respect to Mrs. Besant's memory as the news of her passing had just come. I was stunned. I seemed to collapse on the pillow that was put behind my back, for presidential distinction, on the floor where the members were sitting. I simply could not utter a word. I believe I had no idea that Mrs. Besant could die. I simply said to the meeting: "We must stop all proceedings and observe silence". Politicians, however, cannot observe much silence—I fear they must talk incessantly—and after a minute or two Jawaharlal said: "We had better talk of Mrs. Besant". Mrs. Besant's relations with his father, Pandit Motilal Nehru, had also always been very cordial, and Jawaharlal had been known to her since childhood. He paid a warm tribute to Mrs. Besant, and I simply

kept on exclaiming from time to time: "We owe much to her, we owe much to her".

I could not follow the proceedings at all closely. My emotion was overpowering me, though the meeting continued for a long time; and being the President I could not leave either. But I remember I walked up quickly to the head telegraph office of Lucknow immediately the meeting was over, and sent a telegram to Miss Willson saying: "Offer heart's reverential homage to memory of departed great". I had an acknowledgment of this from Miss Willson from Darjeeling some weeks later. The strain of nursing and the sorrow of the parting were too great for Miss Willson. She too lost her memory soon afterwards, and she died as her great leader had died, when life had ceased to have reactions on her and her memory was dead. Her only memory was Mrs. Besant, and she repeated constantly almost like a child, when last I saw her: "I have known A.B., I have known A.B.". Indeed, it was a rare privilege to have known Mrs. Besant: a privilege of which one can be justly proud and can never forget. I am proud and happy that I had that privilege myself in abundant degree.

My father received the news of Mrs. Besant's passing as he sat in his chair working in his retirement at his table in Chunar. My mother tells me tears trickled down his aging face and long white beard. I doubt if many people have seen my father in tears. Like others, he has also suffered numerous bereavements; only three, within my memory, have affected him: the death in 1903 of my youngest brother, a bright young boy of three from whom great things were expected by the fond parents; the death in 1922 of

his own younger brother to whom he was deeply attached; and the death in 1926 of my wife who had grown up as his own daughter, having been wedded to me when she was only 11, and having been with him when my sisters had been married and when I was studying abroad. But even on these three occasions I do not think he shed tears, as he masters his emotions almost cruelly and would not let the world know how he feels. Mrs. Besant's death, however, brought tears even to his eyes—though Mrs. Besant was really too old and ailing to live any longer, and it must have been a relief to her to go; and my father also was too old with wisdom and experience to cry over a mere death.

THE END

My father was, however, keen on fulfilling his last duties by Mrs. Besant; though curiously enough he is not very keen on ceremonials and ordinarily he goes through them—when he must—fairly carelessly. She was cremated at Adyar and a portion of her ashes was brought, in obedience to her will, to Benares. Though her wish for cremation at Benares could not be fulfilled, her ashes were carried with reverence in a great procession of citizens and members of The Theosophical Society after a meeting in the Theosophical Hall, to the Ganga. My father himself carried them in an urn in his hands, bare-head and almost bare-foot, for he took off his leather shoes and put on a white cloth cover—on sacred occasions we use no leather—and deposited the ashes in the river from a decorated boat, full of friends, colleagues, admirers, including a high Government officer.

The river at the time was in flood and it was with difficulty that the boat was taken to the middle of the stream. Immediately after, he presided over a public meeting in the Town Hall, where tributes were paid to her memory. I was suddenly called upon to speak also, and with emotion related some of the incidents of my childhood.

The citizens assembled at the meeting passed a resolution requesting the municipal authorities of Benares to name after her the road that passes at the back of Shanti Kunj, her old residence, and on which open out gates leading to The Theosophical Society's quarters and the old Central Hindu College, opposite each other, all hallowed by innumerable memories of her. The resolution was duly forwarded by my father as the chairman of the meeting, and her name was given to the road and is inscribed on large marbled-cement boards, specially erected for the purpose on the roadside.

The story of the "Annie Besant Road" in Benares will be found interesting. My father was the Chairman of the Municipal Board, Benares, from the beginning of 1923 to the end of 1925. He was perhaps the most remarkable chairman that the Benares Board ever had. He was very keen on the dignity of the Mayor of the town, and raised the status of the Muncipality as a self-governing institution to a very great extent. The Board under his guidance was also able to introduce many reforms in the administration and to introduce many civic amenities that were unknown before. He fought throughout his term of office[446] for the city's freedom from official interference. At the last meeting of that Board, before its relinquishment of office and the election

of a new Board, the members unanimously expressed the desire to name the road that runs from the Benares Cantonment station past our house, after him. He declined the honour with many thanks, saying that he would prefer the road to be called the 'Vidyapith Road' instead, in honour of the Kashi Vidyapith that also stands on the self-same road. At this desire of his the road was named accordingly.

The Boards that succeeded his Board found it difficult to carry on his traditions, and affairs went from bad to worse. In fact the Government superseded the Board and took its affairs in its own hands. Just before the supersession, however, they had decided to name after him the road stretching beyond the Vidyapith Road and running between The Theosophical Society and the Central Hindu College building, both of which owed so much to him. My father knew nothing about this, neither did I nor anyone else connected with him. The public meeting in the Town Hall of Benares in memory of Mrs. Besant was held during the period of the Board's suspension, when the city's municipal affairs were administered direct by Government through its officials. Soon after the resolution reached the official administrator over the signature of my father, the Executive Officer of the municipality called on me and told me that the previous Board had decided to name the identical road after my father, and it was now embarrassing to find a letter by my father himself asking that the road should be named after Mrs. Besant. He was anxious that I should find out if my father would still desire a change. My father was surprised when he learnt of this, and was most emphatic that the road should be named after Mrs. Besant and not

himself. It is interesting to note that the long stretch of road right on from the Benares Cantonment station to what is known as the Bhelupura crossing in Benares—a distance of quite three miles, which is now called in two parts the 'Vidyapith Road' and the 'Annie Besant Road'—was to have been named after my father by two successive municipal Boards if he had not interfered. It is gratifying to find that they gave the names he himself proposed instead. I think it is a good example for those persons who are most anxious to have roads named after themselves and employ methods to achieve their objects which are not always straight, honest or scrupulous.

WOMAN AND LEADER

A grateful city has thus tried in a humble inadequate manner to keep her memory green; but why did Mrs. Besant die at all? Perhaps for the simple reason that all must die. No one can be immortal. But why did Mrs. Besant suffer so much towards the end? Why did her body survive her mind, so to say? My own theory is, which I once mentioned to Mr. Arundale, when he said there may be something in that—that she had overworked her brain which, unable to bear the strain, at last gave way. Her body, however, pure and unspoilt, would not go. So it outlived the mind, bringing much suffering to her. At last it too had to go; and she went with it. And so Mrs. Besant died; she passed away to the Unknown; anyway, her body was consumed by fire and cannot be seen. This great woman—woman indeed in her appreciation of values; in her affection

for the young; in her capacity to attract love and give it; in her intimate knowledge of human problems and her intuitive wisdom in meeting them; in her simple, serene, and severe domesticity; this great leader—leader indeed in the way she spotted out talent in the men and women she met; in the manner she pulled such persons out of obscurity and pushed them into the light; in the way she bound them to herself in the strongest bonds of personal affection and got her work done by them willingly, eagerly, devotedly; in the hard work that she herself put in from day to day, giving her message by tongue and pen, all the time travelling over and over again throughout the length and breadth of the world; in her courage to face all dangers bravely, and never asking any one to do what she was not prepared to do herself; in her clear vision of the goal and her equally clear idea regarding the means that would take her there;—this great woman and leader died.

So disappeared this Personality from the stage of the world, who had once almost challenged God on His Mighty Throne and questioned His very existence, let alone His Greatness and His Goodness; had hurled anathemas on His established Christian Church, almost a couple of millennia old; had charged Society with high crimes and misdemeanours for maintaining glaring differences between rich and poor; had led what was perhaps the first peaceful industrial revolt, in the form of a strike of match-girls in London; had disturbed the even tenor of smug self-satisfied and ease-loving social life of conventional English men and women.

So passed away this great Pioneer of an Indian education that was to be free from the financial assistance and control of Government, under which boys and young men could breathe the air of freedom, having been specially freed from the fear of corporal punishment; this great preacher of a new and reformed Hinduism whose main tenets she made famous the world over, and whose philosophy of life she taught to those who called themselves Hindus and knew not what that meant; this great advocate of practical social reform in all departments of human life; this fiery lover of liberty for India, who first initiated new modes of political work here, roused a slumbering people to a sense of self-respect, and took them on to paths of ~~free~~ true patriotism and active resistance to wrong.

So went the way of all mortals, this author of a hundred books; the deliverer of twice ten thousand lectures; the inspirer of a hundred million people the world over; this great dreamer of the dream of a new world of peace and goodwill; of a new age of national freedom and international co-operation; of a new union of the peoples of the Earth; of a new orientation of the religions of mankind in the light of that Theosophy which was so dear to her. Optimistic to the last, she worked in her own person to the last also to bring this dream to birth and fruition, to make the vision a living reality in the world of human beings.

So Mrs. Besant went away; the familiar figure of *Bari Mem Saheb*—"the grand old lady"—can no more be seen; her familiar hand can no more be touched; her familiar voice can no more be heard. Where has she gone? I do not know. It is all a vast unknown to many, to me

unknowable also ; but she herself used to speak of it as if she knew it all very well herself in person [447]. I cannot say. I hope she is right. I hope those who love meet again somewhere ; I hope—but I also fear that cannot be.

And so I have come to the end of my reminiscences. In the very nature of things, alas, there can be no more. These reminiscences, many of them, may be of an intimately personal nature ; but I think they have a public value also. Mrs. Besant worked in many spheres, and always left the impress of her personality everywhere. One wonders, however, whether in the wicked world in which we live, any one, however great, can really leave any lasting effect on anyone else. Life seems to flow as ever before ; and joy and sorrow, health and disease, love and hatred, seem to remain revolving in an unending succession just as night and day, despite the endeavours of the best and greatest to cure the evils of life. Neither precept nor example seems to exercise any influence ; and just as Vyasa [448] of old with uplifted hands begged people in vain to follow Dharma [449], from which alone, he said, flowed stable riches and joys for all, and lamented that no one listened to him, and everyone always went into wrong ways, so, I fear, Mrs. Besant and all other great teachers of mankind may also exclaim and sorrow. It all seems so futile.

LESSONS OF MRS. BESANT'S LIFE

Have I myself been able to follow Mrs. Besant in anything? some may ask. Well, to come down from the sublime to the ridiculous, since the age of 10, if not earlier,

I have been a very punctual person. Her punctuality attracted me early. I have by now become almost a by-word for a good humoured joke among my friends for punctuality. People are almost inclined to set their clocks by my arrival and departure at places, though I hope I am not so bad as all that. And in India punctuality is a bad habit ; it does not 'pay'. Here, the last comers are usually served first ; and I have to waste a lot of my time because I get to places punctually. Once I rushed my father along, driving the car myself almost too fast for safety, to keep an engagement with Mrs. Besant ; and when we arrived on the minute, my father said to her : "Prakasa wants to vie with you in punctuality".

The other thing I have unfortunately followed Mrs. Besant in, is in the matter of replying to letters. I do not know if there has been any letter written to me during the last 40 years to which I have not replied, provided it has reached me and not miscarried or been swallowed by official censors, who are always active in India[450]. It also is a bad habit here : correspondence grows to enormous proportions ; the expense in time, money, and energy is heavy in coping with it ; high expectations are roused, and the delay even of a few days in reply—however busy I might be—brings complaints from those who have little to do and themselves scarcely attend to correspondence ; and worst of all, persons from whom I should like and love to hear, do not write, while my heavy mail bag brings all sorts of communications I would rather not have.

There are other things too that I believe I have learnt from Mrs. Besant. Of that I must not and cannot speak

myself. Others may if they like. But I will say this, that following Mrs. Besant can lead no one to what is called worldly success. She herself almost seemed to have a great deal of regard and even respect for those who had succeeded in life in the material sense ; but for herself she followed the paths that led to failure ; and those who tried to follow her must have some other than the usual sense of values and must take failure itself as success. Hers was the path of service to mankind ; to give of what she had and even more than she had ; hers was not the path of exploitation, of taking—as successful persons take—from others very much more than they can afford to give and indeed very often all that they have. Those who followed her have served but have not succeeded. The mean—the right, proper, balanced, middle—path has, I fear, yet to be found whereby men may serve their brother men and not ruin themselves in the bargain.

Those friends who have had the patience to wade through my pages thus far, may feel inclined to say that when apparently I knew Mrs. Besant so well, would I not write something about the lessons her life has to teach, would I not give an appreciation of her work. It would, I fear, be impertinent on my part to try to appraise Mrs. Besant's work for the world and for India. I simply could not do it. I fear—and I am sorry and almost ashamed to confess it—I did not even understand her main work that pertained to worlds other than this and to lives removed from those on this planet and on planes away from the physical. I believe spiritually the distance between her and myself was so great that that side of her work I could

neither apprehend nor appreciate. I had nothing to do with it.

There was another side, and to me a bigger and a brighter side. I could see her physical self, and I loved it for all its beauty, its dignity, its grandeur, its simplicity and its nobility ; I could also see her concrete work and admired it fervently, intensely. I clearly sensed her strong mind, her sympathetic imagination, her earnest constant longing for the betterment of the lot of her fellow men and women, children and animals, on the earth. And there was absolutely on the surface for all to witness her courage and devotion, her truth and chivalry, her incessant hard work and utmost reliability, her intensity of purpose and sympathetic understanding of human nature, her loyalty to comrades and generous disposition, her efficiency in action and strength of will, her meticulous care of little as of great things and her high regard for small as for big persons ; her appreciation of values and of men. All this I have tried to understand and have even tried to follow, however humbly and distantly, however unsuccessfully and ineffectively. She verily was an ideal and an inspiration ; and all that I can do today, as I close these reminiscences, is to lay at the feet of this great lady—one of the greatest beings that took the human form, certainly the greatest person among all with whom I have been privileged to come in contact—my tribute of devotion and of gratitude. I offer as one who always felt like a baby in her presence, a grandson's love to a grandmother. I could do no more even if I tried ; nothing to my mind can possibly be more ; and I cannot do better than

to close with the heartfelt prayer with which she closed many an inspiring book of her own:

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS

NOTES

1. I have preferred to call Mrs. Annie Besant, P.T.S., D.Litt (1847-1933), the subject of these reminiscences, 'Mrs. Besant' throughout this study. To her immediate colleagues she was known as "A. B.", from her initials. Everyone else referred to her as "Mrs. Besant", which is the most familiar name to me also. In her later days she came to be called "Dr. Besant", after the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature was bestowed on her by the Benares Hindu University in 1927. So far as the words "Bari Mem Saheb" go, it would ordinarily simply mean 'the elder English lady'. 'Bari' means 'elder' in contrast to the younger and is commonly used in households to distinguish the older from the younger sister. 'Saheb' has come to be used for a European. Many Indians also living in European style like to be called 'Saheb'. In medieval devotional poetry 'Saheb' is used for Master or God. When a European lady is to be referred to, she is usually designated as 'Mem Saheb'. The feminine form should really be "Sahebâ", but colloquially 'Saheb' is used as common gender; the word 'Mem' being a sufficient qualification to designate the feminine form.

2. Mrs. Besant was very fond of the white colour and preferred it for her clothes and even shoes. Her hair must have turned white comparatively early, as I always remember her with white hair.

3. I went to England for higher studies with Mrs. Besant in 1911. She was one of the persons from whom I received formal certificates which were required for support of applications for admission, etc.

4. Hindus generally live in what are called 'joint (or undivided) Hindu families'. Brothers with their wives and children form such a joint family. They mess together and carry on business together. In our family, however, my father and his brothers messed separately, but they kept the family property in one, and lived for a long time in the same 'compound' in separate houses (see also note 9). This system is somewhat uncommon, but I think it is a very good *via media* between the old cumbrous family with its never-ending bickerings, and the modern system of a family consisting only of man, wife, and their unmarried children.

5. Dr. Bhagavan Das, M.A., D.Litt., is constantly referred to in these reminiscences. He was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the Hindu University in 1929 and by the Allahabad University in 193[illegible]. He has also been affectionately given the title of "Shraddhyeya", *i.e.*, 'adorable', by members of the public and is often referred to as such in newspapers.

6. My uncle, Babu Govind Das, was the elder brother of my father. He was a remarkable man, full of strength of mind and body, and an omnivorous reader who could be referred to for information on almost anything. He was greatly handicapped by asthma, from which he suffered all his life; and unless he moved off to the seaside as soon as the cold weather set in in Benares, he used to suffer terribly. He is constantly referred to in these pages as 'my uncle'. He died in 1926.

7. Babu Radha Charan Sah was the next younger brother of my father. He entered Government service as a Deputy Collector and retired after 20 years of work. He was a perfect shot and a person of great physical courage. He died in 1922.

8. Babu Sitaram Sah, the youngest brother of my father, served the Central Hindu College as an honorary assistant secretary. He was, for some time, a minister in the Kashmir State as well. He has always been interested

in physical sports and was a great cricket and tennis player in his time. He was an intrepid hunter and has bagged many wild animals in the Mirzapur and neighbouring jungles.

9. The house referred to is near the famous temple of *Durgâ*, Goddess of War, also known as the 'monkey temple' from the large number of monkeys that abound there. My father moved on in 1905 to another house near the centres of his activity, namely, the Central Hindu College and The Theosophical Society. This new house he purchased, and named it 'Sevashrama'—'the House of Service'. The old house continued to be in the occupation of his elder and his next younger brothers. The word 'compound' has come to mean in India, the whole of the enclosed area or grounds on which buildings stand and which belong to those buildings.

10. We in India eat sitting on the floor, and with our fingers. Orthodox Hindus are very particular as to the metals of the vessels out of which they eat and the persons who can touch them, or eat out of them.

11. Hinduism is really not a religion as ordinarily understood, but a system of social organisation. That is why no two groups of Hindus have common customs or beliefs. Hinduism, however, has come more or less to have a definite meaning, and is, roughly, the religion of a large majority of persons inhabiting India or Hindustan, the land of the Hindus.

12. *Saraswatî* is the Goddess of Learning, one of the most popular goddesses of the Hindu pantheon.

13. The Central Hindu College was founded in 1897 by Mrs. Besant, in collaboration with her Hindu colleagues, to inculcate high ideals of religion, morality, patriotism and public duty, in the minds of Hindu youth. The College was a pioneer in national education in India. It never took any financial assistance from Government. It was Mrs. Besant's great gift to my country. It used to be affectionately known by its initials as "C.H.C.", and is often referred to

as such in these pages. It formed the nucleus of what later became the Benares Hindu University.

14. '*Pardâ*' is seclusion, observed by many women in the East in varying degrees of strictness.

15. The image in a temple is of a particular god or goddess to whom the temple is dedicated. The image is usually inside the centremost room and is not always approachable. Hindus do not allow non-Hindus to enter their temples, and from many temples the humble castes of the Hindus themselves are barred by their more fortunate brethren of the higher castes. See also Mrs. Besant's letter to me in another connection on pp. 165-6.

16. The non-cooperation movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi. (See note 204). It was an experiment in political agitation by civil disobedience. In 1921 it first took concrete form of the boycott of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) when he visited India. My father was imprisoned in that connection. (See also note 291.)

17. The annual celebrations of The Theosophical Society are known as 'Conventions'. They consist of lectures on Theosophical subjects by eminent Theosophists, and discussion of the world-embracing business of The Society. Large numbers of members of The Society come to these Conventions from all over the world. The Theosophical Society is the world-famous Society founded by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky in 1875 for the study of comparative religions, the investigation of powers latent in man, and the spread of human brotherhood. Its fascinating early history can best be read in "Old Diary Leaves" by Col. H. S. Olcott (Theosophical Publishing House, Madras). It is often referred to in these pages as 'The Society'. 'Theosophy'—'Knowledge of God', 'Divine Wisdom', or 'Self-knowledge',—is what is taught and propagated by The Theosophical Society, and as believers in its tenets, its members are called 'Theosophists'. It is, however, expressly declared that no teachings are binding on any member.

18. Persons who follow the creed of the Indian National Congress are generally known as Congress-minded politicians of India. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 for the purpose of winning Self-Government for India and ventilating the economic and political grievances of the people publicly in order to attract the attention of the rulers both in India and in England. Interesting accounts of the Congress can be read in "How India Wrought for Freedom" by Mrs. Besant (Theosophical Publishing House, Madras) and "The History of the Congress" by B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (All India Congress Committee, Allahabad).

19. Mrs. Besant attacked the attitude of the Indian National Congress at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, and made herself very unpopular in Congress circles.

20. G. A. Henty was a very popular writer of story books for English children. He gave a historical background to his stories and always made an English boy the hero thereof.

21. Mr. E. H. Radice was the District Magistrate of Benares for a long time and was very popular. An administrative unit is called a 'district' in India, and the District Magistrate is the most important Government officer therein, practically the Lord of the district. Mr. Radice was transferred from Benares to Lucknow, where he died.

22. Mr. D. C. (afterwards Sir Duncan) Baillie was the Commissioner of Benares for many years. A number of districts form a division, which is called after the most important district in it. The Commissioner is the administrative head of a division.

23. "Kashi Naresh" really means the 'King of Kashi', Kashi being another name for Benares. (See note 443). The Maharajas of Benares are popularly known as such.

24. His Highness the Maharaja of Benares has ruling powers over a small tract of territory known as the 'State of Benares', with its capital at Ramnagar, a small town, opposite the city of Benares on the other side of the river

Ganga. Benares proper is in British India, but the rulers at Ramnagar are called 'Maharajas of Benares'. The Maharajas have large landed properties in British India and many house properties in the city of Benares as well. The Central Hindu College, the Benares Hindu University, and a large number of public institutions in Benares owe much to the Maharajas of Benares.

25. Mr. H. V. (now Sir Verney) Lovett, was also a Commissioner of Benares for many years. (See also note 22). He is a well-known figure at Oxford (1940) where he retired after his Indian service to devote himself to studies of ancient Indian history.

26. Dr. George S. Arundale, now the President of The Theosophical Society, is too well known to need any description from me. He appears often in these reminiscences and is referred to as just 'Mr. Arundale'.

27. Sir Edwin Arnold was the Principal of the Deccan College of Poona. He is perhaps best known for his lovely lyrical epic "The Light of Asia", depicting the life of Lord Buddha. He is my favourite poet, and I regard him as among the greatest of English poets. My sorrow is great that he scarcely finds a place in English anthologies. It may be so because he largely wrote on Indian themes.

28. "The Secret of Death and other Poems" by Sir Edwin Arnold (Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London).

29. The Book Shop in the compound of The Theosophical Society in Benares used, in the old days, to be very small, where only Theosophical literature could be had. Now it has grown into the biggest book shop in Benares, where the latest literature on practically every subject of general interest can be easily obtained. It is called "The Indian Book Shop".

30. Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., are the well-known firm of publishers in London, who have given to

the European world a large number of ancient Indian books on religion and philosophy through the medium of English translations.

31. The Headquarters of The Theosophical Society are at Adyar, which is a beautiful suburb of Madras some miles south of the city proper. It is a lovely spot bounded on the north side by the Adyar river and on the east by the Indian Ocean.

32. I find the expression "Chairwoman" coming into vogue in India now. I understand in America it is extensively used. I myself do not like it. The usual earlier expression was "Madam Chairman". Mrs. Besant, however, always called herself 'Chairman'. I remember a formal occasion when she began: "I come to you as President of the Board of Trustees, as Chairman of the Managing Committee . . ."

33. *Chauki* is really a four-sided, rectangular seat. It can be large or small and not necessarily square. A very large *chauki* richly appointed is also called a *takht*, which has also come to mean a 'throne'.

34. When Mrs. Besant first came to Benares, she as well as the offices of the Indian Section of The Theosophical Society were housed in a garden house called "Neill Cottage", not far from the Benares Cantonment Railway Station I recollect it very clearly. Later on she purchased a house for herself which she named 'Shanti Kunj'. This was her real Benares home, which is hallowed by her memory. It was fitly called 'The Bower of Peace', with its quiet surroundings and a large compound full of trees and plants.

35. After Mrs. Besant's election to the Presidentship of The Theosophical Society on Col. Olcott's death in 1907, she had to spend a good deal of her time at Adyar and her visits to Benares became rarer and rarer.

36. Our Indian climate is really very destructive, and it is difficult to preserve things for very long. All sorts of

insects, including white ants, are constantly destroying clothes, books, furniture and everything else that they can gain access to.

37. The Central Hindu College Magazine was started by Mrs. Besant as a boys' magazine. It became exceedingly popular and was actually able to give from its profits, a number of scholarships to the students of the College.

38. My Mother, Srimati Chameli Devi, will always be remembered by my father's many friends as their invisible but most generous and hospitable hostess in Benares.

39. Rajputana is the land of chivalry in India, and history and legend are alike full of stories of heroism on the part of Rajput men and women in ancient and medieval times. *Râjpuṭ* really means 'the son of a King'.

40. "Children of the Motherland" (Central Hindu College, Benares, 1906).

41. The students' Debating Society at the Central Hindu College was called "Parliament". (See also note 265).

42. The Honourable Pandit Prakash Narayan Sapru, graduate of Allahabad and Oxford, Barrister-at-Law, member of the Council of State, was and is one of the most brilliant at books and most absent-minded in actual life, of the old boys of the Central Hindu College. He was one of Mrs. Besant's favourites at College.

43. The Right Honourable Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, M.A., LL.D., P.C., is among the foremost lawyers in India today. He has been the Law Member of the Executive Council of the Government of India. He was always a great friend and admirer of Mrs. Besant. She too had high regard for him.

44. Mr. Sankar Saran, graduate of Oxford and Allahabad, Barrister-at-Law, is a successful lawyer at Allahabad. He continues his interest in Mrs. Besant's educational work and conducts a school at Allahabad with her ideals.

45. Munshi Iswar Saran, a great friend and admirer of Mrs. Besant, has now retired from law and politics and devotes all his time and energy to the education and uplifting of the depressed classes now known as *harijans*, a name given to them collectively by Mahatma Gandhi, though among themselves they are divided into over a thousand castes.

46. Dr. Ram Prasad Tripathi is a lecturer in History at the University of Allahabad and an author of books on various periods of Indian History.

47. Mr. Shanti Prasad Agarwal is a public spirited lawyer and continues his interest in politics and social reform.

48. Dr. George S. Arundale was elected President of The Theosophical Society in 1934 after Mrs. Besant's death.

49. Miss Esther Bright was the invariable hostess of Mrs. Besant in London regardless of the length of Mrs. Besant's visit. She is the daughter of Mr. Jacob Bright and niece of the still more famous brother, Mr. John Bright Miss Bright has the very beautiful distinction of having sacrificed herself completely in nursing her crippled mother.

50. Lord Tennyson, one-time poet-laureate of England, is a particularly popular English poet in India. His works are very largely read and admired.

51. Sardar (now Raja) Chiranjit Singh is a well-known figure in Delhi and Simla society.

52. The Mahabharata is the great Hindu epic that describes the internecine warfare among Royal cousins for the mastery of the land. It depicts the times of Shri Krishna, whose famous discourse of the Bhagavad Gita forms a part of this epic.

53. The Ramayana is the epic story of an ideal ancient king who left his throne to keep his father's word and returned home after many adventures only to meet a tragic end.

54. Mrs. Besant gave the name of "The Story of the Great War" to her series of lectures on the Mahabharata. It was originally published by the Central Hindu College and has now been reprinted by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

55. The series of Mrs. Besant's lectures on the Ramayana were published by the Central Hindu College, under the title of "Shri Rama Chandra, the Ideal King". This book too has been republished by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

56. Mr. Kanchi Prasad, I.S.E., belongs to the Imperial Service of Engineers and is now (1940) holding the high office of the deputy chief engineer of India's premier railway, the East Indian Railway. His teachers said he was the best student of mathematics that the Central Hindu College ever had; and I believe he is by far the most successful old boy of the College. He is a nephew of the late Rai Iswari Prasad, an old colleague of Mrs. Besant both in the Central Hindu College and The Theosophical Society, and himself an engineer in the old days in the Central Provinces in Government service.

57. A hostel, *i.e.*, the residential quarters attached to a college in India for the students to live in, is called a 'boardinghouse', and a student who lives there is called a 'Boarder'. Let these words be not confused with what a 'boarder' and a 'boardinghouse' generally mean in England, namely, a paying guest and an establishment that takes them, respectively.

58. 'Shiva' is the famous third figure of the Hindu Trinity. As 'Shiva' he rewards good, and as 'Rudra' destroys evil. He is one of the finest creations of the human imagination.

59. "Namah Shivaya" is a beautiful hymn addressed to Shiva in five verses. It is a very popular invocation.

60. The lectures delivered at the annual Conventions of The Theosophical Society are called Convention Lectures. (See also note 17.)

61. A fair number of Parsis, *i.e.*, Zoroastrians, were attracted to Theosophy or The Theosophical Society. Mr. Vimadalal was a very popular figure in The Society in the old days.

62. Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) founded The Theosophical Society in America in 1875 after his historic meeting with Madame Blavatsky. He was always known as the President-Founder of The Society, as Mrs. Besant was known as the President-Mother. Madame Blavatsky, the real founder, officially worked as the Corresponding Secretary. Col. Olcott had fought in the American Civil War. Among Theosophists he was familiarly known as 'H.S.O.' from the initials of his name.

63. Mr. (afterwards Major) D. Graham Pole was the General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in Scotland at the time of which I write (1911). He was a person with a very strong sense of humour and made light of all the difficulties and disappointments that came in his way.

64. Seth Dharamsi Morarji, Mrs. Besant's Bombay host, and a very good friend of our family also, was a most sincere Theosophist and a devoted follower of Mrs. Besant. He was a very wealthy millowner and a most generous-hearted person who gave away large sums in charity. The Central Hindu College owes much to him. He himself was a person of very simple habits.

65. The Fabian Society was called, I believe, after Fabius, the famous Roman tribune. This Society has been far famed for its earnest endeavours to spread the ideals of socialism. Many distinguished writers of England in the later nineteenth century were connected with this Society.

66. Mrs. Bernard Shaw has been a close collaborator and a true help-mate to her celebrated husband, George Bernard Shaw.

67. George Bernard Shaw is a prolific writer and keen critic of modern life in all its phases.

68. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb are renowned for their joint work in the labour and socialist fields in England. When in Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's Labour Government Mr. Sidney Webb was made a peer and sent to the House of Lords as Secretary of State for the Dominions, taking the name of Lord Passfield. Mrs. Sidney Webb refused to be called Lady Passfield and continued as just 'Mrs. Sidney Webb'. Both husband and wife are noted for their assiduous researches in economic statistics and social problems.

69. *Pirha* is a wooden seat that is placed on the floor and on which the diner sits. The plate of food is placed in front on the bare floor, or on another similar *pirha* (*Sanskrit*, "*Pitha*"). In some parts of India, in well-to-do families, a low raised wooden desk is put for the plate in front of the *pirha*. Mrs. Besant was particular in adapting herself to the customs of the people among whom she sojourned.

70. A boardinghouse, or students' hostel, does not form part of the College Buildings in India as it does in England. The largest boardinghouse of the Central Hindu College adjoined the main College buildings. (See also notes 57 and 209).

71. The "Court" (as they would say in England) in which the temple to Saraswati stands. A 'quadrangle' is a very common expression in India for any four-sided piece of open ground

72. We in India are a notoriously unpunctual people, and unpunctuality has come to be regarded as an incurable national defect among us. Being an agricultural people, time for us is divided by the Sun, moon, stars and planets and by the seasons. This rural psychology persists in towns as well.

73. Babu Madhusudan Das was a well-known social figure in Benares in the old days. He died in 1921, but had lived in retirement for almost twenty years before the end. His elder brother, my own grandfather, Babu Madho Das,

another noted figure of his time in Benares public life, died in 1897. I do not remember to have seen him and my father together, except at the final resting-place, when the four brothers reverently carried the bier of their father in heavy rain, and placed it on the funeral pyre. My father, in the early years of my life, used to be in Government service, being posted from place to place as a magistrate. (See also note 105.) I used to be left behind in Benares with my uncle to study with his sons, my cousins, Shrinivas and Shri Vilas, both older than myself.

74. *Verandah* is a covered corridor attached to the living rooms of a house, which helps to keep the central rooms cool in the plains of India, and being comparatively open is particularly pleasant in the rainy weather.

75. The Benares Hindu University was established by law in 1916. The old Central Hindu College formed its nucleus. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (see note 338) is the virtual father and founder of this University. It occupies extensive lands of its own about 3 miles from the main city of Benares and has numerous buildings and departments.

76. Pandit Motilal Nehru was the great Allahabad lawyer who gave up his flourishing practice to become a political leader working in close collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi. (See note 204). He has been twice President of the Indian National Congress. He first came into great public prominence by his courageous opposition to the official wrongs perpetrated in the Punjab during the Martial Law days in 1919. He died in 1931. He was given by the people the affectionate title of "Tyagamurti", "the embodiment of self-sacrifice" because of his heavy financial and other sacrifices. He was twice jailed for his political opinions and activities. He was among the earliest members of The Theosophical Society, having been initiated by Madame Blavatsky herself. (See next page, note 78).

77. The Subjects Committee is a comparatively small committee that meets to decide the subjects that are to be discussed at the open session of the Congress, drafts the

resolutions on them, and prescribes the speakers. Formerly it used to be a separate body specially elected for the purpose. Now the All-India Congress Committee, namely, a comparatively small body chosen from among the delegates of the Congress, performs the functions of the Subjects Committee. (See also note 428).

78. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is the son of Pandit Motilal Nehru. He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge and is a Barrister-at-Law. He early gave up all ideas of professional distinction and became a most selfless public worker. He is now among the foremost of India's political leaders, has been thrice President of the Indian National Congress, and has suffered repeated imprisonments for his politics. He has become almost a world figure since the publication of his "Autobiography" in 1936. (See also note 212). He is perhaps the most intrepid figure in India's public life today, has visited Moscow and been in Barcelona (Spain) and Chung-king (China) during air raids. He is affectionately known as 'Vir Jawahar', 'Jawahar the brave'. Among his earliest private tutors was Mr. F. T. Brookes, a noted Theosophical speaker and writer in the early days.

79. 'Swaraj' literally means 'self-rule' and can stand for varying stages of 'self-government'. In Congress circles today the word stands for complete independence.

80. *Mauni Amavasya* is observed as a Hindu festival. It is the day closing the dark fortnight of the lunar month of *magh* (roughly January). *Mauni* ('*Silent*') *Amavasya* (no moon).

81. Chunar is a small town about 24 miles up the river Ganga from Benares. It is a beautiful place dominated by a spur of the Vindhya mountain ranges, planted right in the Ganga and surmounted by a 2000-years old fort built by Bhatrihari, an ancient king famous for learning.

82. The Kashi Vidyapith is an educational college in Benares which imparts education through Hindi (see also note 314), and its chief characteristic is that under the very

terms of its foundation it cannot take any financial assistance from any Government, nor put itself under its control in any way.

83. Shri Shivaprasad Gupta is a very noted figure in India's public life. He has made large gifts of his patrimony for the helping of the national cause in many ways and undergone repeated imprisonment for the national cause. His chief passion has been the spread of Hindi (see note 314) and the use of it as the medium of all education. The Kashi Vidyapith was founded by him mainly to fulfil this ideal. He is an old boy of the Central Hindu College as well. (See also note 145).

84. The C.H.C. silver badge was a coveted prize, and I believe was won by only two students. It was given for particularly meritorious services to the College.

85. Babu Mangala Prasad was among the most brilliant, most public-spirited and best-hearted students of the old Central Hindu College. He belonged to a very well-known and wealthy family of Benares, called the "Azmatgarh family", and was the younger brother of the Hon'ble Raja Sir Motichand, C.I.E., a noted figure in Benares and among the earliest helpers of the Benares Hindu University. Babu Mangala Prasad was a cousin of Shri Shivaprasad Gupta (see note 83) and a very popular figure wherever he went. His early death was widely and deeply mourned.

86. Vidyarthi Sahayak Sabha literally means in English—an association (*sabha*) for the helping (*sahayak*) of students (*Vidyarthi*).

87. Mr. C. Jinarajadasa has been Vice-President of The Theosophical Society and is author of many books. He speaks several languages and is a scholarly lecturer also.

88. Lady Emily Lutyens is the grand-daughter of Lord Bulwer Lytton, the famous novelist, and daughter of Lord Lytton, once Viceroy of India. (See note 199). Her brother, the present Lord Lytton, has been a Governor of

Bengal and has also officiated as Viceroy. Her husband, Sir Edwin Lutyens, is the well known architect of New Delhi. (See note 201). Lady Emily has been an earnest Theosophist and a most devoted follower of Mrs. Besant.

89. Mr. J. Krishnamurti, a young boy at the time (1911-12) of whom high hopes of becoming a second Messiah were entertained. He is now (1940) a celebrity in another way, who is followed by many people in many countries. There are fuller references to him at other places in these reminiscences.

90. Mr. J. Nityanandam was the brother of Mr. J. Krishnamurti, and later died in America. Mrs. Besant had taken both the brothers for education to England.

91. It is said of Lord Buddha that whenever his great and favourite disciple Ananda asked for advice regarding conduct in the world, he replied : 'Do as others do.' He evidently did not like to disturb social life and seems to have confined his teachings only to the sphere of spiritual endeavour and for those who came to him for religious enlightenment.

92. The monthly magazine, *The Theosophist*, is the most important periodical published in The Theosophical Society. It is the *ex officio* property of the President, and has freely expressed the feelings of succeeding Presidents of The Society, enabling members in various countries to keep in touch with their President.

93. See Note 49.

94. See Note 89.

95. See note 90.

96. St. Paul's Cathedral is one of the sights of London, with its beautiful large dome and its wonderful whispering gallery.

97. King George V was one of the most popular of England's Sovereigns, correct, patriotic and constitutional.

He reigned from 1910 to 1936, and visited India in the winter of 1905-6 as Prince of Wales, and again in 1911 for a Coronation Durbar at Delhi.

98. His Majesty 's Theatre is one of the most fashionable theatres of London and is specially famous for the revival of Shakespeare's plays. Some of the most famous of English actors have played on its stage.

99. Sir Herbert Tree was one of the most celebrated of England's actors and His Majesty's Theatre was more or less his creation.

100. With Sir Herbert Tree were associated at the time some of the most famous English players of the day at His Majesty's Theatre.

101. "Julius Caesar" is among the most brilliant of Shakespeare's plays, and it used to be beautifully staged at His Majesty's.

102. Though the word 'queue' is French, the system of forming queues is much more popular in England than anywhere else. It is surprising how English crowds automatically form queues, making it easy for things to be done quickly.

103. Mrs. S. Maude Sharpe was the General Secretary of the British Section of The Theosophical Society at the time (1911). She was a great friend and colleague of Mrs. Besant and a noted figure in the Theosophical world.

104. Readers will find the impression Mrs. Besant made on my father on this occasion, described in his 'Annie Besant and the Changing World' (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras), which may be usefully read in order to obtain an idea of Mrs. Besant's subjective life and an appreciation of her spiritual work.

105. My father served the Government as a Magistrate for nine years after leaving college and before joining the Central Hindu College as its honorary secretary. He served in many districts of the United Provinces. (See also note 73).

106. "The Science of the Emotions" was my father's first book. It has run into many editions and has been translated into many languages. He is the author of a number of other books. Practically all the books written by him in English have been published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. His Hindi and Sanskrit works have been published elsewhere.

107. Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891) was the great social and religious reformer, a giant who dominated the stage in politics in the seventies and eighties of the last century, in England.

108. Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh-Bonner was the daughter of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and his biographer.

109. Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), the amazing world celebrity of the later nineteenth century, created a great stir in human thought and society. She seemed to challenge everything. She, in collaboration with Col. H. S. Olcott, founded The Theosophical Society in America in 1875. She is known to her followers as 'the first Theosophist of our age', and is the author of the most important books on Theosophy, the chief of these being "The Secret Doctrine" and "Isis Unveiled". (See also note 116). She is popularly known as "H. P. B." among Theosophists.

110. Reckless and serious charges of all sorts have been made against various figures of The Theosophical Society from time to time, and Mrs. Besant always valiantly and chivalrously defended her colleagues in all circumstances.

111. Shrimati Rukmini Devi, a high class Brahmin lady of Tamil Nad (Madras), married Mr. Arundale, defying all social conventions. She has made a great name for herself as artist and dancer. She constantly travels about the world with her husband, the President of The Theosophical Society.

112. Mr. C. W. Leadbeater (1847-1934) was a prolific writer of Theosophical books, and seemed to rouse

strong likes and dislikes among those who met him. Mrs. Besant herself held him in very high esteem. He was a most lucid writer and always wrote simple and dignified English. He was a great purist and would not allow any word to be used loosely or carelessly. He invariably wrote with the confidence of personal knowledge of his subjects. He was familiarly known by his initials as "C.W.L."

113. Babu Govind Das was my elder uncle, and he too, like my father, used to be called by Mrs. Besant by the half name 'Govind' familiarly and affectionately. His relations too with Mrs. Besant were most cordial. (See note 6).

114. *Bhakti* is 'devotion'; and Indian languages—Sanskrit as well as the spoken provincial languages—are full of the most ecstatic devotional literature, which is really more popular than the philosophic literature. ~~In Hindu philosophy~~ Sanskrit is famous the world over.

115. All ancient Hindu scriptures are in the Sanskrit language, and a knowledge of it is almost indispensable for any one who would like to get into direct touch with ancient Hindu thought.

116. Madame Blavatsky's books, "Isis Unveiled" and "The Secret Doctrine" (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras) may almost be called the scriptures of The Theosophical Society. (See also note 109).

117. Sir Satyendra Prasanna, first Lord Sinha of Raipur, had an amazing career. Unable to get even a small Government appointment, he joined the Bar and became a very successful lawyer at Calcutta. He held many official positions and was given many titles by Government. He was the first Indian Governor of a Province and the only Indian Peer. He was also for some time the Under-Secretary of State for India. He held all positions that the heart of the most ambitious Indian can desire—official as well as non-official. Those who knew him have told me that he was a very modest individual withal, and never himself sought any honour, office or position: they all came to him unasked.

118. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was the famous American President at the time of the American Civil War. I believe the book that I read was called "The Pioneer Boy".

119. Mr. V. C. Patwardhan was the younger brother of the Chief of Sangli, a small Maratha State in South India. He was in his third year at Trinity College, Cambridge, when I first went up there. He had gone to England very young. He and I were very good friends at College. He later became a well known figure in Theosophical circles. He was very devoted to Mr. J. Krishnamurti and travelled extensively in his service in many lands.

120. Mr. Charles Bradlaugh-Bonner was a brilliant student at College. It was my regret that I could see very little of him there, as he, like most others, was, I believe, mostly confined to his own set.

121. Dr. Arthur Richardson, D.Sc., came out to India to help Mrs. Besant at the Central Hindu College. He was its first Principal. He served in an honorary capacity and gave his all to the College. A cruel attack of paralysis kept him in great and perpetual pain and incapacitated him for all work, for about three years before the end. He died in 1912 and was cremated in Benares.

122. Mr. Harry Banbury went on from Benares to be the headmaster of a school at Lucknow, where he later died.

123. Sir William Ramsay was a world-famous scientist, and I believe had come to India to help the great industrial magnates, the well-known house of the Tatas, to select a suitable site for their then projected steel and iron works.

124. There are many systems of physical exercises in vogue now. In my childhood, one only heard of Sandow. He visited India once and gave an exhibition of his wonderful muscles to awe-struck audiences.

125. Mrs. A. C. Lloyd was a most lovable and loving person of the earliest years of the Central Hindu College. The boarders were always around her, and she looked after

them with a mother's care. She had come all the way to India in the evening of her life for Mrs. Besant's sake.

126. Miss Francesca Arundale, aunt (mother's sister) to Mr. Arundale, a great friend and colleague of Mrs. Besant, and wholly devoted to her nephew whom she had adopted as her son, changing his family name of 'Kay' to 'Arundale'.

127. Dr. George S. Arundale.

128. See Note 111.

129. The Criminal Intelligence (or Investigation) Department of the Government of India is known by its initials as the 'C.I.D.' This is the secret police of the Indian Government, and members thereof are all familiarly known as 'C.I.D.'

130. I was arrested for the first time in April 1930 for formally manufacturing contraband salt against the law, following the orders of the Indian National Congress whose general secretary I was at the time. The manufacture of salt is a Government monopoly in India. Its heavy cost is a cause of much distress and a perpetual source of grievance to the people. This was the first *satyagraha* or civil disobedience movement in India after the boycott of the Prince of Wales' visit in 1921-22.

131. See note 126.

132. Mr. George S. Arundale—See also note 26.

133. *Karma* is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Hindu faith and philosophy. It really means "action", and implies that what a man is in this life is the result of what he did in the last, and will be in the future according to what he does now. (See also note 347).

134. Countess Wachtmeister was a fellow-worker of Madame Blavatsky and among her earliest friends.

135. Mrs. E. Windust was among Madame Blavatsky's earliest disciples and workers. She is still living in Holland.

136. Miss S. E. Palmer is an American lady and worked for long years as the Principal of the Central Hindu Girls' School, loved and respected by her pupils, friends and colleagues alike. She has been living at Adyar for many years and is in her 86th year now (1940).

137. Miss Lilian Edger, M.A., was a very successful teacher of English in the Central Hindu College, and a good public speaker. She was the first woman M.A., in New Zealand. She has returned to New Zealand in her old age after a very long spell of work in India. Here she made many friends for whom her own attachment was very great.

138. Miss A. Herrington was a most successful teacher of the lower classes of the Central Hindu School, and was able to interest the boys in their work to a very remarkable extent.

139. Miss A. J. Willson was the truest of all true devotees of Mrs. Besant. She is often mentioned in these pages. She helped my father in the office of the Central Hindu College as an honorary assistant secretary also for many years.

140. Mr. Ernest Wood is a very able Theosophist and author of numerous books. He unsuccessfully contested the last election for the Presidentship of The Theosophical Society.

141. See note 112.

142. Shri Upendranath Basu, familiarly known as " Phatik Babu ", was closely associated with Mrs. Besant from the very beginning of her Indian career, and her relations with his family were as cordial as with my own. He was for long years the General Secretary of the Indian Section of The Theosophical Society. He is now in his seventy-ninth year.

143. Shri Jnanendranath Basu, familiarly known as Nani Babu, was a most hard-working colleague of my father in the Secretariat of the Central Hindu College. He has had a long experience of administration in many large landed estates also, and has always been held in high esteem for his character.

144. Shri Kali Charan Mitra, familiarly known as Charan Babu, worked hard in the office of the Central Hindu College as its honorary Treasurer. The College owes much to him for his devoted work.

145. Babu Durga Prasad worked for many years as the honorary assistant secretary of the Central Hindu College. He is a versatile person and is at home in innumerable subjects from watch-making to numismatics. His great creation that will live is the "Bharat Mata" temple, dedicated to "Mother India", in Benares. "Mother India" is in the form of a beautiful relief map of India on the floor of the Temple in white marble sculptured to scale. It is another gift of Shri Shivaprasad Gupta's generosity and imagination to Benares and the world. (See note 83). Visitors come to Benares from all parts of the world, and the "Bharat Mata" temple is one of the sacred shrines and great sights of Benares. It is open to every one. Visitors, however, are required to take off their shoes before they can enter the temple.

146. Pandit Cheda Lal was the Superintendent of the Central Hindu College boardinghouse for almost a quarter of a century after retiring from the position of the head-master of a school at Bareilly. He was a strict disciplinarian, held in awe and respect by the students. He was highly esteemed and loved as well.

147. Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Aditya Ram Bhattacharya came to the Central Hindu College after retiring from the Professorship of Sanskrit at the Muir Central College, Allahabad. He was later the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University. He wrote a number of Sanskrit text-books for school boys. He was a learned and very orthodox person.

148. Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, M.A., LL.B., sacrificed a very promising career as a lawyer to join the Central Hindu College as an honorary worker. He was at that time really a "rationalist", and the Central Hindu College drew him for its nationalism rather than for its religious teachings.

He, however, soon became a most ardent follower of Mrs. Besant. He succeeded Mr. Arundale as the Headmaster of the Central Hindu School and a most successful Headmaster he was. He was also the General Secretary of The Theosophical Society, Indian Section, for some years, and the Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University. He has taken active interest in politics and served a term as a member of the U. P. Provincial Legislative Council. He still carries on Mrs. Besant's educational work at the Rajghat School and College in Benares for which he has made heavy financial sacrifices.

149. Prof. Pandarinath Kashinath Telang was a brilliant scholar and sportsman, the son of the famous lawyer, scholar and High Court judge, Mr. Justice Tryambak Telang of Bombay. His devotion to Mrs. Besant was absolute. He was a great teacher of history, and deeply loved his students among whom he was most popular.

150. Mr. C. S. Trilokekar taught religion among other subjects; and though he knew no Sanskrit, he knew his subject very well, particularly the Bhagavad Gita. He was in charge of the hostels also, and was much loved by his boys. His control over himself was remarkable. He would never lose his temper despite the gravest provocation. He is now principal of the Madanapalle Theosophical College.

151. Prof. J. N. Unwalla, a Parsi gentleman, was the very popular principal of the Samaldas College in the Bhavanagar State in Gujarat. After retirement he joined the Central Hindu College, where he served till he died in 1916. He was a striking figure, and despite the cruel infirmity of cataract in his eyes, his attachment to his books was great.

152. Prof. V. R. Dalal was a practical scientist who was already connected with industrial works before he came to the Central Hindu College. Throughout the Great War of 1914-18 he was kept in internment in Germany. He served as an honorary professor of Chemistry at the Central Hindu College.

153. Prof. B. Sanjiva Rao joined the Central Hindu College immediately after taking a good degree in Mathematics at Cambridge. He was also a very thoughtful person. He later became the Principal of the Kayastha Pathshala College at Allahabad, and still later the Principal of the Queen's College at Benares. He has now retired and goes on building up, with Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, the Rajghat educational institutions at Benares.

154. Prof. E. A. Wodehouse was every inch an Oxford don, correct, conventional, and almost forbidding. In his own way he was a warmhearted man. He migrated later into educational work at Allahabad and Bombay. He died at Cheltenham, England, in 1936.

155. Prof. I. J. S. Taraporevala is a Parsi gentleman, son of the late Mr. Jehangir Sorabji of the Hyderabad State service, an earnest Theosophist, who was for some years the General Secretary of the Indian Section of The Theosophical Society at Benares. Mr. Taraporevala is a versatile person, at home with a large number of subjects. He later went on to the Calcutta University, and then served as the head of a Parsi Theological Institute in Bombay.

156. Mr. M. G. Kanitkar is a quiet, unostentatious worker and has given himself completely to Mrs. Besant's educational work. He is actively connected today (1940) with a new school opened under the aegis of The Theosophical Society at its Benares Headquarters.

157. The Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi was a pleasant and popular figure in his time in Benares. He was a Japanese priest, and did some special study in Sanskrit here. He often came to our house, liked our food and loved our flowers, specially the chrysanthemums, which reminded him, he said, of his own country. My father heard from him only once or twice after he left India. Kawaguchi is the author of "Three Years in Tibet" (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras).

158. Babu Abhay Charan Gui first worked as a clerk in the secretary's office under my father, and later went to the Principal's office where he served hard and honestly to the last.

159. In India we use various kinds of *dal* (pulses) which are turned into soup ordinarily but are also eaten in other forms. *Moong* is the lightest and most easily digestible of these pulses.

160. For vegetarians in London the Eustace Miles' Restaurant used to afford great relief, and I often went there for my lunches when I was in London. The *menu* always included ' Rice and *dhal* with poppadam, 8d.' I sometimes had more than one helping of this dish.

161. The *Kurta* is an Indian equivalent of the shirt, only it is looser and is put on very often as the outer piece of clothing like a coat. One of the styles, with buttons on the shoulders, was invented by my father and continues to be very popular still in The Theosophical Society. The cut is popularly named after my father the ' Bhagavandas Kurta '.

162. Lakshmana, though a very orthodox Hindu himself, served Mrs. Besant faithfully and did all her work without hesitation or complaining. Because of caste restrictions it is not easy to get a Hindu servant willing to do all kinds of work.

163. Bhagelu used to be attached to Miss Willson in the early days. He was quite a favourite of hers and served her well.

164. " Man : Whence, How and Whither," by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras).

165. Mr. J. Krishnamurti (see Note 89) is the central figure of the book " Lives of Alcyone ". " At the Feet of the Master " (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras), said to have been written by him when he was only 11 years of age, created quite a sensation and was for some time the subject of critical speculation.

166. Mrs. Marie Russak was a well-known figure in The Theosophical Society in the old days. She gave up a

promising career in opera to join Colonel Olcott, acted as his secretary and was attending him at Adyar at the time of his death. She is now Mrs. Henry Hotchener, and is living at Hollywood, U.S.A.

167. The Theosophical Society was greatly shaken when the cult of the coming Christ was sedulously preached therein. The new faith was known by many names but was commonly called " The Krishnamurti Cult ".

168. Mr. Chandra Bhal, B.Sc., M.L.C., (U. P.) was a very popular student of the Central Hindu College, a member of the cadet corps, a prefect and a fine social worker. He was elected a member of the Upper House of the Legislature of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1937, and is now a very popular figure in Lucknow, the headquarters of the Provincial Government (1940).

169. The Central Hindu College was affectionately known by the initials " C.H.C." (See also note 13).

170. " Durant's Cuttings " are very well known to journalists. They are very useful for public men, for they supply cuttings from the press on any subject one may require. The service is really very efficient.

171. The Queen's Hall, London, is a beautifully appointed hall with perfect acoustics, and Mrs. Besant seemed herself to like this hall. One year when I was in England, it could not be had for the evenings, and so her lectures were actually given in the mornings, which was rather unusual, but she attracted large audiences even at that odd hour.

172. The Albert Hall is a huge place in which large demonstrations take place, because of which it has become more or less historic.

173. Queen Boadicea is the famous British Queen who fought the Romans in the old old days, and Joan of Arc is the heroic French Maid of Orleans who fought the British. She was ultimately burnt to death as a witch. Both are great women in history.

174. See note 266.

175. Mr. Israel Zangwill was a popular Socialist speaker and writer. He never seemed to hesitate to express his views regardless of consequences. He had the happy knack of infusing humour into his speeches and writings. He wrote many novels, essays, poems, and plays in the forty years ending with his death in 1926.

.176 Hyde Park is the splendid park in London where everyone from all over the world seems free to talk what he likes to interest all who may care to listen to him, on anything under the sun.

177. The well-known Margot Asquith, Lady Asquith and Oxford.

178. The famous British Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. H. H. Asquith, later Earl of Oxford and Asquith.

179. The Derby is the great horse race in England which everyone is anxious to win. It brings a huge fortune at once to the lucky winner.

180. On the Derby Day of 1913, Miss Emily Wilding Davison threw herself in front of the horse Anmer, as the horses were coming round Tattenham Corner. She was a well-known militant suffragette, and had the suffragette colours fastened round her body at the time. She died a few days later in the Epsom Cottage hospital as a result of the kick on the head she received then : for which injury a trephining operation which she underwent afforded no relief. It was a bold deed ; and that it was admired is proved by the fact that Her Majesty The Queen inquired after her at the hospital.

181. The problem of the treatment of political prisoners in India is one of perennial difficulty. I shall not enlarge upon it here.

182. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst was always an active suffragist and suffered and sacrificed much for the women's cause in England.

183. Miss (now Dame) Christabel Pankhurst, was one of the founders and leaders of the Women's Social and Political Union, and worked for women's suffrage. She is a woman of remarkable courage, and nothing seems to deter her from her task. She edits a journal which adumbrates the Second Coming of the Christ. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst is Editor of *The New Times and Ethiopia News*, which is specially interested in combating Fascism and freeing Abyssinia. Both ladies are unconventional in many ways and never hesitate to practise what they preach.

184. Srimati Anasuya Sarabhai, better known as Anasuyaben, after her return from England in 1913, took up with rare courage and devotion the heavy and difficult task of ameliorating the condition of mill hands in Ahmedabad. She is the head of the Labour Union there, and has established an ideal organisation. She is the elder sister of the well-known Ahmedabad millionnaire mill-owner, Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, and is herself much loved and respected by everyone, from Mahatma Gandhi downwards.

185. I have been greatly struck with admiration at the way thousands of these humble English women earn an honest living in London. They all do their work with remarkable efficiency.

186. See note 266.

187. See note 265.

188. The President of the House of Commons in England is called the Speaker, though he is not expected to speak at all, except to control the business of the House and give rulings.

189. The Benares Hindu University bestowed the title of Doctor of Literature on Mrs. Besant, *honoris causa*, in 1927, after which she was generally known as Doctor Besant.

190. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., is a very noted figure in politics, law and education, in the Madras

Presidency. He was at one time an Executive Councillor of the Madras Government, and later the Leader of the Opposition in the Central Legislative Assembly, where he interested himself particularly in defence problems. He now (1940) lives in retirement, devoting himself to academics. He is a great Sanskrit scholar.

191. The Bursar has among his other functions, the duty of introducing persons to the Vice-Chancellor, to be admitted to various degrees at the University of Cambridge. The ceremony is an elaborate and impressive one.

192. Lord Minto had succeeded Lord Curzon as the Viceroy of India. He is particularly remembered for the Minto-Morley political reforms introduced in India, because of which the legislatures were enlarged. Separate communal electorates were also introduced in his time. (See also note 233).

193. I do not know if one can read the history of France, in all its varied facets, anywhere better than in the historical novels of Alexandre Dumas.

194. *Shamianas* are large cloth roofings set up temporarily, under which large meetings are held. They are effective against sunshine or light showers, but give way under torrential rainfall, as Benares witnessed on this occasion.

195. Mr. Arundale introduced the system of prefects in the Central Hindu College, where a few senior students were selected by him to look after discipline and offer social service to fellow students.

196. The Viscountess Churchill was a good friend of Mrs. Besant. She was President of The Theosophical Society's Social Committee in London.

197. See note 88.

198. The branches of The Theosophical Society are usually called 'lodges', and when a number of lodges are grouped together, this is called a 'Federation'.

199. Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty (1875-1880) is particularly remembered for the Darbar he held at Delhi—the first of its kind—to proclaim Queen Victoria as the Empress of India; as also for a severe famine. He is reported to have boldly stated that 'the British have broken to the heart the promises they uttered to the ear' so far as the political rights of the people of India were concerned.

200. Lord Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873) was a famous novelist who has written many historical and social novels, besides some weird spiritual ones. Mr. Leadbeater in his book speaks of Lord Lytton as having possessed some superphysical powers also.

201. Sir Edwin Lutyens is a well known architect and was invited by the Government of India to plan New Delhi. (See also note 88).

202. Mr. Henry S. L. Polak has always been a staunch friend of India. He has suffered much as a collaborator of Mahatma Gandhi in his fight for the Indian cause in South Africa. He is now a well known attorney-at-law in London. He is a Theosophist, and was always a very good friend of Mrs. Besant. He has been Treasurer of the English Section.

203. Dr. Bal Krishna Kaul was a famous medical doctor of Lahore. He was a very earnest Theosophist in the old days and a great friend and colleague of Mrs. Besant. He was an intrepid horseman, and even in his old age he used to drive motorcars very fast. He was a man of great physical courage. He died in 1938.

204. Mahatma Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is one of the world celebrities of all time. He needs no note from me. 'Mahatma' means 'great-souled'. He is referred to in these pages as 'Mahatmaji' or 'Gandhiji'. 'Ji' is an honorific suffix added to names. Many sidelights on his work may be found in his Autobiography—"The Story of my Experiments with Truth", in two volumes. (Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad).

205. *Charkha*, a spinning wheel, has now already been evolved in many beautiful forms and shapes. When Mahatma Gandhi's movement began in 1920, it was a very crude piece of mechanism that had been found in some villages where it continued in vogue. In the Panjab it had really never died. The plying of the spinning wheel is regarded as essential for all serious-minded Congressmen.

206. See note 18.

207. *Tikli* is a long needle-like instrument with a round support at the bottom and a curved neck at the top. Yarn can easily be spun on it, and it is portable—a great qualification if it is to be utilised by persons constantly on the move.

208. Mr. Devadas Gandhi is the youngest son of Mahatma Gandhi; and now (1940) the general manager of the popular English daily newspaper the *Hindustan Times*, issued from New Delhi.

209. Boarders are the residential students of a college who stay on the college premises. As such they are differentiated from the day scholars who only come for purposes of study during the day. (See also notes 57 and 70).

210. According to the ancient Indian scriptures, human society is divided into four—and no more than four—castes. Hindus who are supposed to follow these, are today divided into almost four thousand castes, each caste having split up into innumerable subcastes, which to all intents and purposes have come to regard themselves as separate castes; and more often than not, it is not easy to find out to what original caste a sub-caste belongs. There are now many learned discussions on the subject, and many bitter controversies as well.

211. See note 83.

212. "Jawaharlal Nehru: An Autobiography" (John Lane, The Bodley Head, London).

213. The dictionaries say that 'verna' means a home-born slave.

214. "Recollections", by John Viscount Morley, O.M. 2 vols. (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London).

215. *Coolie* is generally used for porters at Indian railway stations.

216. Mr. A. J. Balfour (1848-1930) was a famous conservative British statesman and philosopher. He was the Prime Minister of England for many years. He later became an Earl.

217. Except in the very large towns, Europeans and Indians live away from each other and have very little social converse. In the railway trains, however, when they were forced, so to say, to be together, there used to be many quarrels in the old days. Europeans as a rule did not like Indians to travel with them and very often unceremoniously turned them out of their compartments.

218. The success of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War was a great event for the Asiatic peoples, who during the two preceding centuries had been overrun by European nations without any resistance worth speaking of. It was almost taken for granted that Asia would be divided up among various European powers without any difficulty. Jiu-jitsu is a favourite and vigorous exercise of the Japanese people and very useful in single combats. It helps to build up a powerful body.

219. Incidents like these would be unheard of in European countries, but were quite common in India a few decades back.

220. A provincial Government of India is also called a 'local Government'. Municipal administration is often referred to as 'local self-Government'.

221. The official head of a Province at that time used to be addressed as His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor. Now he is known as His Excellency the Governor.

222. Sir John Hewett was a strong administrator and not a very popular one. He was very fond of motoring, and that resulted in greatly improved roads connecting the various cities of the Province.

223. See note 22.

224. It would be difficult for the English people genarally to believe that such could be the case. The civil servant in England is very different from the civil servant in India. The irresponsible power that he enjoys in India enables him to do almost anything he likes.

225. Mr. Louis Desmond Christie, who joined The Theosophical Society in 1908. His sons were Ralph and Louis Christie. He was a great friend of Mrs. Besant and the life and soul of The Theosophical Society at the time in his part of Scotland. He had a big beautiful white cockatoo, which used to say, "To hell with the Pope" whenever asked: "What news from Rome, cockey?" Some gentleman of an older generation was very anti-Catholic and anti-Pope and had taught the bird this slogan. I was admitted to Cambridge by Mr. Christie's kind help.

226. Gaya is a famous centre of pilgrimage for Hindus. Pious Hindus from all over India come to this place to offer libations to the souls of dead ancestors. It is also sacred for Buddhists.

227. Lord Buddha attained enlightenment at Gaya, and a huge image in a temple commemorates the event at Buddha Gaya, about 12 miles from the main city.

228. See Mrs. Besant's letter to me on page 115, and Note 366.

229. In 1905 my father left the ancestral home mentioned in Note 9 and moved on to this new house.

230. Lord Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925) was perhaps the most intellectual and the most industrious Viceroy (1899-1905) that England ever sent out to India. He put

his impress on almost everything. He was admired and hated by turns.

231. Sir Bamfylde Fuller was the first head of the newly constructed province of Eastern Bengal which was formed by amalgamating a portion of Western Bengal with Assam.

232. The earlier province of Assam had as its head only the Chief Commissioner. Later the title of Lieutenant-Governor was given to the head of the Administration. Now in the reconstructed province of Assam the head is called His Excellency the Governor, as in other Provinces.

233. Lord Morley (1838-1923), English philosopher and statesman, was the Secretary of State for India for many years (1905-1910). His appointment was greatly welcomed by Indian politicians, who all admired his politics and his philosophy. He, however, proved a great disappointment to all concerned because of the high expectations that were raised, which could not be fulfilled. He also, like so many others, was a victim of circumstances. His " Recollections " give in part the story of the political reforms known as the Morley-Minto Reforms. (See also notes 192 and 214.)

234. His Majesty King George V was the first and so far the only King of England to come to India. In December 1911 in a huge Darbar at Delhi he was formally acclaimed Emperor of India.

235. The communal problem of India, namely the adjustment of the relations between Muslims and Hindus in India, is a very ticklish one. It is taxing the minds of the most thoughtful and no practical solution is being found. It is in a way blocking national progress in every direction and making social and economic life most difficult.

236. Sir Surendra Nath Banerji was a great figure on the Indian political stage in his time. Alike as an orator and a journalist he was a great force. He was twice the President of the Indian National Congress, and his daily English paper, the " Bengalee ", was a power in the land.

He was in later years a Minister in Bengal when political reforms were introduced in 1920. He was quite proud of his achievements as a public man, for he calls his Autobiography " A Nation in Making " (Oxford University Press).

237. One of the signs of mourning among Hindus is not to put on any shoes or caps for a certain number of days after the death of a relative and to shave the head after those days are over.

238. Babu Ashutosh Chatterji was a very loved and popular figure in his time in the Central Hindu College. He privately coached me in mathematics and was truly wonderful in the way he popularised his subject to the boys. He was as familiar with the inside as with the outside of the books in the college library and helped the students to make a proper choice for private reading.

239. Local Government officials in India do not like any local persons to do anything over their heads. They are very sensitive specially in official matters, and if any one deals with a higher official directly, he is always likely to get into trouble with the local authorities. The attitude unfortunately of many local officials towards the Central Hindu College was far from friendly, and that was always a matter of anxiety to the college authorities.

240. 'Swadeshi' means anything 'pertaining to one's own country'. 'Swa' means " one's own " and '*desh*' means " country ".

241. 'Bazar' really means a market. In the countryside it is a name given usually to the weekly or semi-weekly markets that are held at stated places on stated days to enable the people round about to make their simple purchases.

242. See note 202.

243. Pandit Hari Bhatt Manekar was a very vigorous old gentleman of high character. He was a teacher of Sanskrit for almost 40 years in the Jainarayan's High School, the

oldest English school of Benares, founded in 1818 by Raja Jainarayan Ghoshal, who had been cured of a painful disease by a Christian missionary doctor and his gratitude took the form of his generously founding this school. It continues to be conducted by the Church Mission Society.

244. Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a great figure in Indian politics, who repeatedly suffered imprisonment for his opinions. He was a Maharashtra, proud of the achievements of his people. He was also a great scholar and wrote many learned books during the periods of his incarceration. He was affectionately given the title of 'Lokamanya', "the adored of the people", by his countrymen. He died in 1920.

245. A *dhoti* is an unsewn piece of cloth tied to and hung from the waist. It is commonly used all over India in varying forms, sizes and colours.

246. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha, as its name implies, is an association for the spread of the Nagari script. Sanskrit is also usually written in the Nagari script. This Association has done much not only for the spread of the Nagari script but also for the enrichment of the Hindi language. (See also note 314). Its hall is very often used for public lectures.

247. Manchester was a particular target for attack as most of the English cloth imported into India was manufactured in Manchester.

248. What are now called the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh were formerly known as the North Western Provinces, as they used, long ago, to form the North Western Frontier of The British dominions in India. When British power extended to the borders of Afghanistan and the present North-West Frontier Province was constituted, the name of these Provinces was changed to the present one.

249. Sir James Digges La Touche was one of the Lieutenant-Governors of the United Provinces and appears

to have been a quiet old-fashioned type of Indian civilian. (See also note 269).

250. Sushila, who later became Mrs. Mahavir Prasad of Meerut, was a popular little girl in the Central Hindu Girls' School of the old days.

251. The Princess is now Her Majesty the Dowager Queen-Mother of England.

252. The Benares session of the Indian National Congress in December 1905 was the 21st in continuous succession and a most momentous one. It was presided over by Mr. Gokhale (see also note 389), and it was clear that there was soon going to be the usual parting of the ways between the older and the younger ideologies.

253. See Note 21.

254. His Highness the Maharaja of Benares has a spacious and well-appointed guest house called 'The Nandesar House' in the city of Benares, where all his distinguished guests stay.

255. King Edward VII, the popular English King, son and successor of Queen Victoria, had also visited Benares as Prince of Wales. The main hospital of Benares is named after him.

256. The relations between Nepal and India are very intimate. As there are not adequate educational facilities available to boys in Nepal, many come to British India for education. Mr. Lok Bahadur Sah was a very popular student in his time. Nepal is an unfortunate country in many ways, though the higher castes and classes there still have the feelings of a free people.

257. His Highness Maharaja Sir Prabhu Narayan Singh was a highly esteemed ruler of the State of Benares. The city owes much to his generosity. He died in 1931.

258. *Darbar* has come to mean a huge assemblage. Really it corresponds to what is called 'audience' in European courts.

259. The Chief Minister of His Highness the Maharaja of Benares used to be called ' Diwan ' in the early days. Later on he came to be known as the Chief Secretary. Today the State is in for a long minority.

260 At the coronation of King George V (1911) when I was with Mrs. Besant in London, I could see that her enthusiasm was as great as that of any English person. Arrangements were made to give her and her party special seats to enable them to view the coronation ceremony. She herself, however, was Irish on the mother's side and was proud of it. I have seen her putting on the conventional Shamrock on St. Patrick's day.

261. There is always a great struggle among the Indian princes for salute guns and precedence. The problem of the Indian princes is a ticklish one, and despite endless endeavours it is as far from solution as it ever was. The Viceroy of India has a position higher than the greatest Indian Prince, both officially and socially. The provincial Governors and even Presidents, that is the official representatives of the Indian Government at the courts of Indian princes, enjoy a status superior to the latter. The position is greatly resented.

262. Some of the Indian princes in Rajputana, who are the oldest among Indian princes, claim their descent from the Sun and the Moon.

263. After the break-up of the Moghul power, enterprising persons carved out kingdoms for themselves before the power of the British was established. The British themselves also created a number of Indian States.

264. See Note 129.

265. With the help of Sir William Anson's " The Law and Custom of the Constitution " (Clarendon Press, Oxford), we prescribed our own ceremonial on lines similar to those of Westminster for the College debating society which we called ' Parliament '. The debates were also carried on in accordance with the conventions of the British House of

Commons. Prof. J. N. Unwalla, accompanied by other "Lords", used to open Parliament with great solemnity on behalf of the "King". Prof. Unwalla always loved to play the part of the Great, and was himself a striking figure. (See also note 151).

266. Mrs. Besant founded an Association for the young called "The Order of the Sons and Daughters of India". She admitted young men and women in this Order and inculcated ideals of service and good character.

267. Mr. Bradlaugh suffered greatly because of his opinions on religious matters. The world owes much to him for his fight for freedom and honesty. It is now no more necessary, thanks to him, to take the oath in law courts before giving evidence or in Legislative Assemblies before taking one's seat.

268. The revolutionary movement was strong in Bengal, and a number of Bengali youths had come to be regarded as heroes for their activities and sufferings.

269. Sir James La Touche was friendly to the Central Hindu College. (See also note 249).

270. Sir James (later Lord) Meston was a noted Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. He was learned, and his personal habits were simple. He was a fluent speaker.

271. Mr. A. W. Collie was the Principal of the Central Hindu College after a cruel stroke of paralysis had incapacitated Dr. Richardson, the first Principal. He was a very tall person, measuring about 6 feet 3 inches in height, and made runs quickly at cricket. While teaching English, the expression 'six by two' came up in the text-book. He smiled and said: "Some may need more". He never needed any grave underground though, as later when he went into the educational service of the Kashmir State and lived in a houseboat, he was burnt to death by the boat catching fire.

272. Messrs Senapati Saran Singh and Gajapati Saran Singh, sons of Rai Bahadur Thakur Pashupati Saran Singh, an official of the Alwar State, were brothers and lived in the College Boardinghouse for a long time. The brothers were very popular both with the staff and with the students. The elder, Senapati, used to be a good hockey player too. The younger, Gajapati, is a keen Theosophist and is a teacher in the Besant School at Rajghat in Benares.

273. The houses in the main city of Benares are all built of stone and are invariably very high. Four storied houses are quite common.

274. Mr. Mark Collins served the College for only a few years. I remember his visits once or twice even after he had left.

275. A 'Sabha' really means an assemblage. Any association is and can be called a 'Sabha'. Technically 'Sabha' (also called 'Pandit-Sabha') is a gathering of learned people in a private house for the discussion of a specific subject.

276. *Pandit* has now become an English word meaning a learned person. It really connotes deep learning in Sanskrit texts.

277. A 'shawl' is an unsewn piece of woollen cloth—sometimes with beautiful borders—used for wrapping round the body as protection from cold winds.

278. 'Smriti' is something that is to be remembered. There are many Smritis in Hindu theology, the most famous being the Manu Smriti embodying the laws laid down by the great ancient Hindu lawgiver, Manu.

279. Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gangadhar Shastri, C.I.E., was a very prominent and respected figure in Benares academic life in my childhood.

280. The Government of India have introduced many titles. The C.I.E.— "Companion of the Indian Empire"—is a title coveted by non-officials.

281. The highest title for Sanskrit learning that the Government of India gives to anyone is that of Mahamahopadhyaya, *i.e.*, the great great teacher.

282. I think the correct transliteration of my name should be as Mrs. Besant has written it here. My old teacher, Pandit Hari Bhatta Manekar, had taught me to transliterate the "Sha" of Sanskrit as "Sa" with a mark on the 'S', and so I used to spell my name as "~~Sri Prakasa~~" Śrī Prakāśa ~~but later dropped the diacritical marks~~. add diacritical strokes

283. Naini Tal is a beautiful spot, about 6500 feet above sea level, in the Kumaun hills. There is a big lake (Tal) and a temple dedicated to the Goddess "Naini". It has grown up into a big town with numerous houses for the rich and the fashionable. The Government of the United Provinces moves up there during the summer months. The United Provinces are so called because they form a single administrative unit formed by the union of two provinces—the so-called province of Agra with its supposed capital at Allahabad and the province of Oudh with its capital at Lucknow, which is *de facto* the capital of the whole province and seat of its Government, now.

284. Ranikhet is another town further up in the Kumaun hills between Naini Tal and Almora. It also is a beautiful spot, and British soldiers are sent there in large numbers in the summer for the sake of health and recreation.

285. Kathgodam is the last railway station for Naini Tal and other towns in the hills on that side. There are good roads from Kathgodam up the hills, and there is plenty of motor traffic.

286. A Deputy Collector is an Assistant Magistrate in a district. He has to deal with rent and revenue cases, and a lot of other miscellaneous work which used, in the early days

of the British regime, to be disposed of by the district Magistrate and Collector, so called because he had to maintain law and order, and also to collect all Government dues and demands. Gradually Indian assistants were appointed and were called 'deputy magistrate and ~~eductor~~ collector' or more briefly 'deputy collector'. In the old days this used almost to be the highest office to which Indians could aspire in Government service. (See also note 105).

287. Higher services used to be reserved for Europeans, but some Indians used to be taken into them for special reasons and qualifications. It was regarded as a great privilege to be selected to those higher jobs.

288. Mr. J. Ross-Scott retained his interest in Theosophy to the last, and I remember his visits to the Theosophical Conventions at Benares. He belonged to the civil service and rose to a high position in the judiciary. He was the son-in-law of the famous Mr. A. O. Hume, also of the Indian Civil Service, and popularly known in India as the 'father of the Indian National Congress'. Mr. Hume was among the earliest members of The Theosophical Society, and it is a matter of sorrow to many that he later quarrelled with Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, the founders of The Society.

289. The highest Judicial Court in the little province of Oudh used to be called the 'Judicial Commissioner's Court' Now it has been raised to the status of a Chief Court.

290. A Deputy Collector is transferred from district to district. He scarcely remains at one place for more than three years. My father during his nine years of service, served in almost as many districts. (See also notes 105 and 286).

291. My father was sentenced to a year's simple imprisonment for refusing to give security for keeping the peace in December 1921. A notice had been distributed regarding the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales over his

signature, and though the visit itself had passed off quietly he was arrested afterwards and sentenced. (See also note 16).

292. My father presided over the Provincial Political Conference at Moradabad in 1920. Most provinces in India have the institution of annual political conferences subordinate to the Indian National Congress. Mrs. Besant had presided over the United Provinces Provincial Conference held in Gorakhpur in 1914.

293. Mrs. Besant, along with her companions and colleagues, Messrs. Arundale and Wadia, was interned in the summer of 1917 because of her political activities. She remained in internment for three months and was then released.

294. My father had not to complete a whole year of imprisonment. There were certain legal flaws, and there was an agitation in the press. He was released after about five weeks of prison life. (See also note 291).

295. Ootacamund is known as the queen of the hills. It is the summer capital of the Government of Madras, and is regarded as the most beautiful of all such capitals in India. The Theosophical Society has a house of its own there—"Gulistan"—which Mrs. Besant with her companions occupied during her internment of 1917.

296. My father has expressed his ideas on these subjects in numerous articles and pamphlets. They can perhaps best be known from the 'Outline Scheme of Swaraj' which he drew up in collaboration with Mr. C. R. Das (see note 407) and in his "Ancient versus Modern Scientific Socialism". Both have been published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

297. *Rishis* are seers who play important parts in ancient Indian literature. And in the modern world no less.

298. The impress of Marxism, *i.e.*, the philosophy of Karl Marx as embodied in his various books on Capitalism

and Communism, is strong on the thought of the younger Indian politician who is wielding increasing influence on the counsels of the nation today (1940). No subject is studied with greater avidity than Marxism, and no persons are so honoured in modern India as the heroes of the last Russian revolution.

299. Lenin (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, 1870-1924), Liberator of Russia in the Revolution of 1917, is one of the greatest of men of all time and is deeply venerated by his people.

300. Stalin (Dzhugashvili, Joseph), the dictator of Russia after the death of Lenin, is certainly one of the most powerful of individuals in the world today (1940).

301. *Gaddi* is a colloquial expression, now almost adopted in the English language, meaning a throne, or seat of office.

302. These are the opening words of the great novel, 'Anna Karenin' by Leo Tolstoy, the world-famous Russian writer, thinker, reformer, philosopher, and honoured almost as a prophet.

303. The problem of marriage is a difficult problem everywhere, and in India it is further complicated by various restrictions of caste, etc. Then there is amongst us the almost universal custom of early marriage, some orthodox persons feeling that girls must be married before they attain puberty. Marriages are almost always arranged by parents and are regarded as unavoidable by and indispensable for everyone. Reformers are fighting hard to change various customs by legislation and the education of public opinion ; but so far they have not been very successful.

304. See Note 14.

305. Among Hindus, *Rudraksha* beads are extensively used for telling prayers and as charms.

306. Silk is supposed to be purer than cotton, and many people put on silk cloth while taking meals and for religious ceremonies.

307. It is a most common custom among Hindus to shave the head on the death of a relative, and to offer water and various articles for the satisfaction of the souls of the dead on stated days.

308. *Sanskaras* really mean sacraments ; but the word is variously and correctly used for habits of mind and body, as also for customs, traditions and general ways of life and conduct.

309. See "The Essential Unity of All Religions" by Dr. Bhagavan Das (The Kashi Vidyapith, Benares).

310. Manava Dharmasar, *i.e.*, 'The Essence of Human Duty' or 'The Religion of Man in Brief' by Dr. Bhagavan Das (The Kashi Vidyapith Benares).

311. The great Bengali poet, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, is a world famous Indian of modern times. He won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913, and has just been given (1940) a Doctorate by the University of Oxford at a special congregation held for the purpose at the Poet's own institution of Shanti Niketan. (See note 312). He was given a Knighthood which he discarded at the time of the Martial Law horrors of the Punjab, 1919.

312. "Shanti Niketan", meaning the 'Home of Peace', is the name of the International University founded by Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, to which he has given his all. (See note 311).

313. The Nobel Prizes are very coveted prizes endowed by the great Swedish scientist and humanitarian, Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. Large cash prizes are awarded year by year to those who make the most notable contributions to literature, science, peace and other departments.

314. Hindi is one of the most important languages of India and is extensively spoken, written and understood. Tulsidas, the author of the Ramayana in Hindi verse, is one of the greatest writers of the world.

315. My father was elected a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934, but resigned his office in 1938. It was with difficulty that the Indian National Congress leaders were able to induce him to allow them to set him up as a candidate. He was elected unopposed. He found the work and atmosphere in ~~parliament~~ the Assembly very uncongenial from the start, and often chafed at the rules of debate and the restrictions imposed by law and convention on the speakers. I fear he got utterly hopeless of being able to do anything, particularly after his Hindu Intercaste Marriage Validation Bill fell through. In this Bill, as the name shows, he wanted legal sanction for inter-caste marriages among the Hindus, which is not available at present unless a Hindu becomes an Arya Samajist, or undergoes a civil marriage, which, besides being not sacramental, introduces complications in the matter of domestic, social and economic status.

316. The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, P. C., the famous statesman and educationist, successor to Mr. Gokhale (see note 389) as the head of the Servants of India Society, agent of the Government of India in his travels to the British Colonies, once Agent-General for India in South Africa, and then Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University, is the aged and greatly respected leader of Liberal politics in India.

317. Miss Josephine Davies (afterwards Mrs. Sidney Ransom) was a good friend of my family and sometimes stayed with us. She is still a noted and popular speaker and writer on Theosophical subjects, and is residing in England.

318. Sanctuaries et Paysages d'Asie (Librairie Hachette et Cie, 79 Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris, 1905).

319. Mr. and Mrs. Hodgson-Smith and their son Basil were all important figures in The Theosophical Society. Two

daughters are still living—Hilda (Mrs. Powell) in England, and Leslie (Mrs. Reed) in Malta.

320. Miss Fuller was an artist painter. She had taken a great fancy to a little Indian girl named Malati, whom she took with her for education in England. This girl was in a boarding school at Heswall, not far from Harrogate, where Miss Fuller had taken up her residence at the time (1912).

321. I was elected a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934.

322. Rai Bahadur Shyam Sundar Das, as he is now known, is a highly respected literary veteran of Benares, shaken with age and infirmity and bearing manfully his many domestic bereavements and misfortunes, and still as devoted to his old love, Hindi, (see note 314), as he was in his youth and serving her with all the fervour of the older days. He is one of the founders of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, an association in Benares for the spread of the Hindi language and the Nagari script. (See also note 246.)

323. It is a pity that a great deal of unnecessary controversy has now arisen as regards the Hindi and the allied Urdu languages with their differing Nagari and Persian scripts respectively. This controversy is not only harming the normal growth of the languages themselves, but is also creating a great deal of communal difficulty in the land.

324. Rai Bahadur Dr. Gyanendra Nath Chakravarti was a very old member of The Theosophical Society. He started life as a teacher, became an Inspector of Schools, and later the first Vice-Chancellor of the Lucknow University. In his old age he used to live in Benares in retirement and died there in 1937.

325. Mr. Bertram Keightley is among the oldest Theosophists and worked with Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in the earliest days of The Society. He founded the Indian Section and was its first General Secretary. He has spent the greater part of his life in India with Mr. Chakravarti.

He left Benares after Mr. Chakravarti's death and is now (1940) living in retirement at Allahabad, in his 81st year.

326. Incense sticks are very commonly used in ceremonials and religious worship among Hindus. They give out scented smoke.

327. Cardamums are spices used in various ways. They are eaten by themselves after meals. I have found Europeans generally liking the taste of cardamum. It is possible that it gives a taste very much like that of a cigarette.

328. The Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College had prepared text-books on Hindu religion and ethics for study in their school and college. I believe Mrs. Besant and my father were the chief authors, though they formally sought advice from others also. These give in a very good outline the main tenets of the Hindu faith and make successful attempts at reconciling apparently differing beliefs among the various creeds of Hinduism. A catechism as well as elementary and advanced text-books were prepared. These were formerly published by the Central Hindu College, and have now been re-published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

329. Mrs. Pitt was a very kindly lady and was very friendly to Indian students at Cambridge. She was a very staunch Theosophist.

330. Mrs. Poole, the mother of Mrs. Pitt, was a most hospitable person and an exceedingly brilliant conversationalist. Her home was always open to Indian students at Cambridge and she was always willing to help us in every way. I will always remember her kindness.

331. "Theosophy in India" was the name of the official journal published by the Indian Section of The Theosophical Society. It is now called the "Indian Theosophist".

332. Wurzburg is a pretty town on the outskirts of a beautiful German forest. I had gone there with Mr. Taraporevala, (see note 155), who was carrying on some higher

studies in Sanskrit under Prof. Jolly, Professor of Sanskrit at the Wurzburg University.

333. See note 154.

334. See note 152.

335. Mr. N. S. Rama Rao also went up to Cambridge, and later travelled extensively throughout the world with Mr. Krishnamurti. He is now the Principal of the Besant College at Rajghat in Benares (1940).

336. Mr. Yadunandan Prasad belonged to a well known family of Gaya. The whole family has always been deeply devoted to Mrs. Besant. Mr. Yadunandan Prasad was attached to Mr. Krishnamurti and died in America in his service. He was the younger brother of Mr. Damodar Prasad. (See note 442.)

337. Sir Sunderlal was one of the most famous and prosperous lawyers at Allahabad. He was a very safe person and was trusted all round. He received many titles from Government. He greatly helped Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the early days of the Benares Hindu University, of which he was the first Vice-Chancellor also. For long years he sat as a member of the United Provinces Legislative Council, but would scarcely cast a vote one way or the other. I believe he never spoke there. He is referred to as 'Pandit' or 'Dr.' Sunder Lal, besides 'Sir Sunder Lal' in these pages.

338. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has been among the most prominent figures of India's public life for many decades, and even today (1940) at the advanced age of 78 his interest in public affairs remains unabated. He is the father of the Benares Hindu University. (See note 75). He is a most remarkable man in every way, and is perhaps the greatest representative of orthodox and cultured Hinduism. He is often referred to for short as 'Pandit Malaviya' and affectionately as 'Malaviyaji'. ~~The Public~~ The public have given him the additional title of 'Maha mana' the high minded

339. See note 82.

340. "Annie Besant: An Autobiography" (T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1893). Also there is the 1939 edition, with Dr. Arundale's Introduction, and additional biographical detail, published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.

341. Shri Hirendra Nath Datta is a learned Theosophist who has great breadth and depth of wisdom. He was always a close associate of Mrs. Besant in all her Indian work. He is Vice-President of The Theosophical Society (1940) and its legal adviser.

342. Messrs. Asquith and Lord are a famous firm of European tailors in Bombay. I believe they and Messrs. Ranken & Co. of Calcutta are regarded as the most fashionable tailors in the land.

343. The Peninsular and Oriental Navigation Company's are the most expensive and the most fashionable boats for passengers between India and England. They have various grades even in their first class. Mrs. Besant took the most expensive cabins. I believe it was technically called "First Class A". The company also runs a special train service between Bombay and Calcutta in connection with its weekly incoming and outgoing steamers.

344. 'B.A.' stands for 'Bachelor of Arts, of a University.

345. The MacDonnell Hindu Boardinghouse is one of the many students' hostels at Allahabad. Like many other institutions, it owes its birth to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (see note 338), who has always been keen on the welfare of Hindus. This boardinghouse was attached to the Muir Central College at that time, and is now a part of the Allahabad University. Hindu students have always patronised it in large numbers. It was named after Sir Antony MacDonnell, a Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces (1895-1901), who is reported to have been particularly friendly to Hindus. He was created a Baron in 1908 and died in 1925.

346. Their Highnesses Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwar, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., and Maharani Chimnabai. They passed a good period of their lives in Europe and travelling in many lands.

They were noted social reformers, and their State owes much to their initiative in many matters.

347. Hindus generally believe in *Karma*, which roughly means that one reaps as he sows. (See also note 133).

348. Reincarnation is another doctrine of the Hindus. It connotes rebirth of the soul again and again in accordance with its *Karma*.

349. Mr. Alan Leo and Mrs. Bessie Leo were kind and dear souls, noted astrologers and staunch Theosophists. I often enjoyed their hospitality during the years I was in England, and I felt a great personal wrench when I learnt that one after the other they had passed away. They were a most devoted pair. Alan Leo was president of the Hampstead Lodge.

350. This Home was at 39 Fellows Road, Hampstead, and was a home to me whenever I was in London during my stay in England. I have many happy memories of persons I met there.

351. Mr. Herbert Whyte and Mrs. Ethel Mallet Whyte are well known in Theosophical literature. Mr. Whyte died in the Great War of 1914-18. Mrs. Whyte as Miss Mallet was the author of many good books on Theosophy easily intelligible to beginners and children.

352. Mr. T. W. (later Sir Thomas) Arnold was in charge of Indian students in England on behalf of the India Office. Because of the difficult political situation, strict watch was kept on Indian students studying in England at the time. Mr. Arnold knew India, having been at one time the Principal of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh (now the Aligarh Muslim University).

353. Mr. F. E. Pargiter was an ex-judge of the Calcutta High Court. Just as there was Mr. Arnold in London at the head of the Central Office (see note 352), so were there representatives at the various universities to look after Indian students.

354. That is where I played croquet as a partner of Mrs. Besant. (See pp. 62-63.)

355. Miss Arundale had followed our party by the next boat to England. She was worried at the situation that had arisen in The Theosophical Society at the time (1911) owing to the emergence of the Krishnamurti cult, but her devotion to Mrs. Besant and her deep attachment to her adopted son, Mr. Arundale, enabled her to weather all the storms successfully.

356. Mr. Louis Christie, who went into the army and was posted in India too for some time. He fought in the Great War of 1914-18. (See also note 225).

357. The Rev. Dr. E. W. Barnes, Sc.D., F.R.S., my tutor at Cambridge, later became the Master of the Temple (London), then a high church dignitary at Canterbury, and is now the famous Bishop of Birmingham (1940). His social and theological opinions are far from conventional or orthodox.

358. Mr. I. Chrouschoff was very kind to me though, and was among the first of the seniors to call on and make friends with me. At Cambridge the new undergraduate, the freshman (' fresher ') dare not speak to a senior unless first spoken to. During the first term there, one always feels very lonely, and anyone who cares to speak to a newcomer is more than welcome.

359. Mr. J. H. A. Hart, M.A., was a Lecturer at St. John's College. Lecturers at the university are known as ' dons ' colloquially.

360. The Students' Union of Cambridge is too well known all over the world for any detailed mention. It is housed in spacious and comfortable premises of its own.

361. The cauliflower is a favourite vegetable of mine, as I believe of most ; but I had come to abhor it completely for the way it was cooked and served in England. I often got that and boiled potatoes as the only dish when my hosts

knew I was a vegetarian. Over-courteous hosts served themselves also with the same dish in my honour.

362. The beautiful lawns in the various courts of the Colleges at Cambridge cannot be walked over by undergraduates. The privilege of stepping on them is reserved for M.A.'s, and sometimes students chafe when they have to walk round these lawns and they are in a hurry. I remember one fellow undergraduate telling me that as soon as he became an M.A., the first thing he would do would be to trample all the lawns of the College! No one does that, though. The students, however, are all free to walk on the equally beautiful lawns that are called the "backs" of the colleges. The "backs" of my College, Trinity, are particularly beautiful, with a lovely avenue of tall old elms.

363. There are three "terms" at the University of Cambridge each year, that is periods of time, each period being of about ten weeks, during which the University is open. Out of each term, about eight weeks constitute a full term, which is kept by a student sleeping the prescribed number of nights within the precincts of the University and dining the prescribed number of times in the hall of the College. The dinner in the hall itself has come to be called "hall" and the expression is quite common: "Have you had hall?"

364. The Dean is an important official at the University, in charge, among other things, of discipline.

365. The Marker was perhaps the most wonderful official I knew at College. In the beginning of each term he got the new students to write out their names for the first few days during hall, and then he never forgot the names again. He took down the attendance in the class room, in the dining hall and in the chapel without calling out any names. He scarcely ever made a mistake.

366. It was here at the "Lodge," Esher, that I played croquet against Mrs. Besant and won the game. (See p. 78).

367. The Rev. Dr. E. W. Barnes, my tutor at Trinity College, Cambridge, who was in charge of my studies there. (See note 357).

368. Mrs. Herbert Whyte was in charge of my boarding and lodging when in London. (See note 351).

369. Mr. T. W. Arnold was in charge of my money. (See note 352).

370. The company was then known as Oesterische Lloyd. It later became, I believe, Lloyd Triestino.

371. Dr. (afterwards Sir) Brajendra Nath Seal, was a great scholar, a constant reader of books on all subjects, a great Bengali educationist, and once Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University. He seemed to depend entirely on books for all his knowledge and information and never appeared to worry to observe anything first-hand. One morning as the steamer was tossing on a heavy sea, I came on deck before breakfast and found him deep in a book, with one hand holding the iron railings for support. After wishing him good morning, I said: 'What a heavy sea'! 'Is it'? he replied innocently, and seemed to look at the sea for the first time just below his nose. I loved to watch the waves rise and fall and the ship with them. I was not at all seasick on my return voyage though the Arabian Sea was very rough. I therefore enjoyed the voyage immensely.

372. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose is the elder brother of the even better known Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. Both brothers are leading figures in Bengal politics, the elder being a prosperous barrister in Calcutta and the leader of the Opposition in the Provincial Legislative Assembly.

373. Mr. Apurva Kumar Chanda, now high in the Government Educational Service of Bengal, was a very brilliant student and is now a successful educationist. We were fellow-students at Benares. He was a great devotee of the poet Tagore, to whose poetry I believe we of Benares

were first introduced by him. He later went on to Oxford, where he was a very fashionable undergraduate indeed.

374. Prof. Phani Bhusan Adhikari was an ideal teacher of philosophy. He had taught me logic, psychology, and various branches of philosophy at College. He was always a most respected professor. He has only recently retired (1939), after nearly 30 years of service, from the Benares Hindu University.

375. Prof. Shyama Charan De comes nearest the ideal of a practical ascetic of all I know. He decided to join the Central Hindu College as an honorary Professor at the age of about 22 or 23, when he passed his M.A. He first worked in a College at Bareilly, and after serving 20 years there and saving some money from his salary and allowances, he resigned his office and came to the Central Hindu College as an Honorary Professor of Mathematics in 1913. He lived through all the crises of the College and the University, and has only just retired (1940) at the age of 70, loved and honoured by all. He is passing his last days on the premises of the University in a house of his own. By his will everything he has goes to the University.

376. Mani Bhushan Banerji became a teacher in the Central Hindu School after graduation and is still there as such (1940). We have an "Old Boys' Association" in the School and College, but very few join it. It is a pity that in India not many people try to keep in touch with their old institutions. That is why tradition persists with difficulty in our institutions, whether educational or other.

377. Mr. Ganpatrai Saksena was a noted figure in the College Boardinghouse in his time and was greatly trusted by Pandit Cheda-Lal, (see note 146), the Superintendent. He is now a professor in the Government Agricultural College at Cawnpore.

378. Mr. Dwarkanath K. Telang, brother of Professor P. K. Telang (see note 149) has been a most devoted disciple of Mrs. Besant. He and I were class-fellows at

College. He later went to Oxford and is now living near Bombay.

379. Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, a noted Bombay business man, has been an earnest member of The Theosophical Society and an enthusiastic supporter of Mrs. Besant. He worked with Mrs. Besant as a member of the Home Rule League for India, and later joined the Indian National Congress. He has also suffered imprisonment on that account.

380. Mr. Kali Prasanna Chakravarti has been for a long time past a noted figure in the Central Hindu School. He joined as a teacher of mathematics in 1902, and after uninterrupted service of 38 years, during which he held many times the office of officiating Headmaster, he has just retired (1940). He has always been deeply loved and highly respected by his students and has remained steady in looks and everything else throughout these 38 years. He appears in 1940 to be exactly as he did in 1902 when he first came and took my class.

381. Mr. (now Sir) C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, popularly known as "C.P.", is the Diwan of Travancore (1940). He has had an amazingly successful career and has risen from office to office. He opposed Mrs. Besant in the sensational lawsuit in Madras, when the father of Messrs. Krishnamurti and Nityanandam (see notes 89 and 90), who were minors at that time, demanded back the custody of his sons from Mrs. Besant, who in her turn had taken them to England for higher studies. Later by Mrs. Besant's invitation Sir C. P. joined and supported her in her political campaign.

382. The Home Rule League was started by Mrs. Besant and became very popular. It had branches all over the country and young men flocked to the movement in large numbers. It became a very powerful factor in the fight for Swaraj.

383. "New India" was the name Mrs. Besant gave to her daily paper through which she carried on a continuous agitation for Indian Home Rule.

384. "Commonweal" was Mrs. Besant's weekly paper, in which there were very informing and instructive articles on a variety of subjects. It was perhaps the best English weekly in India as long as it lasted. Mrs. Besant carried on both "New India" and the "Commonweal" at enormous sacrifice and had to pay heavily for them in every way.

385. Mr. B. P. Wadia was closely associated with Mrs. Besant in her publishing work at The Theosophical Society's headquarters at Adyar, and also in the management of "New India", her daily paper. He shared her internment in 1917. Soon after the internment, he went to America, and is today (1940) engaged in building up his 'Arya Sangh' at Bombay in collaboration with his wife, Madame Sophia Wadia, an American lady.

386. Mrs. Besant used the expression 'yesterdays' for the old type of moderate liberal politicians and 'tomorrows' for those of the forward school who were looking forward to a better day and working for it. She used these words with terrific effect in her papers.

387. See note 78.

388. See note 76.

389. Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale is one of the most famous of modern Indians. He was one of the elder statesmen of the land, though he died when he was only 50 and presided over the Indian National Congress at the early age of 39. (See notes 18 and 252). He appears to have created a great impression wherever he went, and is lovingly remembered by all who had close personal contact with him. He founded the 'Servants of India Society' for the study of public problems, and gathered an earnest band of students and workers around him. He was a great friend of England and laboured incessantly to keep up friendly relations between India and England on the basis of Indian self-government. He was a very bold and out-spoken member of the old Indian Legislative Council for years.

390. See note 244.

391. See note 236.

392. Mahatma Gandhi's work for his countrymen in South Africa will always remain a most wonderful achievement of a new technique of political agitation. It was that work which made Mahatma Gandhi a force to be reckoned with. "Satyagraha in South Africa" by M. K. Gandhi (S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras,) can be usefully referred to in this connection. Satyagraha means insistence on truth. *Satya* (truth), *Agraha* (insistence).

393. The chief remedies for all ills prescribed by Mahatma Gandhi ~~were~~ are truth and *ahimsa* (non-violence); communal harmony, that is peace between Hindus and Muslims; *Charkha* (spinning); and removal of untouchability, *i.e.*, abolition of the cruel system which makes large masses of the people born as the so-called low castes physically untouchable by so-called higher castes of the Hindus.

394. One of the cardinal tenets of orthodox Theosophists is that there are great spiritual beings with their homes in the Himalayas who are constantly looking after the welfare of the world, who are directing all the activities of mankind, and who send out from time to time great persons to take charge of the world's work. They are called Masters of Wisdom.

395. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917) was the most honoured figure in his time in Indian politics. He fought for the political and economic regeneration of the people since almost the beginning of British rule in India. He was a member of the British House of Commons also for some time. He was the first person to use the word 'Swaraj' (see note 79) in connection with Congress politics, as President of the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906.

396. Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta was a most domineering personality and all his colleagues seem to have stood in

great dread of him all the time. He was feared and respected wherever he went. He died in 1915.

397. See note 338.

398. Sir Rameshwar Prasad Singh, G.C.I.E., was a great figure in his day. He was an orthodox Hindu, very loyal to Government, and helped Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the early stages of his work for the Benares Hindu University. He was reputed to be among the three or four wealthiest individuals in India.

399. Many observers have found a great deal of similarity in the life, work, and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus Christ. In fact Mahatmaji is a very popular figure among Christian missionaries. The Rev. Dr. J. J. Holmes in America; the great Oxonian, Professor Gilbert Murray, and the French litterateur, Romain Rolland, made Mahatmaji famous in the Western world on the basis of his work in South Africa.

400. Lord Hardinge was among the better known and liked of India's Viceroys (1911-1916). The Durbar at Delhi in 1911 was held during his term, when King George VII was acclaimed Emperor of India. He was the victim of a bomb attack also. He will be remembered for his bold stand for Indians in South Africa. It was he who got the partition of Bengal annulled and removed the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi.

401. See note 129.

402. Mr. Mahadeva Desai is a most faithful devotee of Mahatma Gandhi and is constantly chronicling his master's doings. He is a most hard-working secretary of the Mahatma and his constant companion.

403. The authorities of the Benares Hindu University had an anxious time after this incident. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya paid a visit to the Commissioner of Benares, and it was with difficulty that he was able to prevail upon the authorities not to take any precipitate action. Since then

Mahatmaji has been the central figure in so many extraordinary happenings, that this incident seems to be almost insignificant. Being the first of the kind, however, it may well be regarded as the most important. Judged in the light of future events, it presaged what was coming.

404. The Muslim League is a political organisation of educated Muslims whose object is to ensure the wellbeing of their community in the constitution of India. At the Lucknow Congress (1916) a pact was signed between the Muslim League and the National Congress regarding the proportion of representatives in the various legislatures and administrative bodies in India, of Muslims and non-Muslims. This mutual settlement was accepted by Government. Today the Muslim League is very suspicious of the Congress in every way and is seriously sponsoring a scheme of dividing up the country into a ' Hindu ' and a ' Muslim ' India.

405. Mr. Sankarlal Banker was one of the fashionable persons in his younger days in London and Bombay. He became a devoted disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and is now at the head of the Ahmedabad Labour movement and an important worker of the All-India Spinners' Association for the encouragement of home-spun cloth.

406. See note 379.

407. Mr. Chitta Ranjan Das was a most powerful personality of Bengal. He was an amazingly successful lawyer and gave away all the money he earned in a most recklessly charitable and generous manner. When once he made up his mind, nothing could stop him. He was a most attractive figure, and a large number of persons gathered round him, giving their all with him to the cause for which he stood. He presided over the Congress at Gaya in 1922 after having done eight months in jail. He was lovingly given the title of ' Desh Bandhu ', " the friend of the people," by the people themselves. He died in 1925.

408. Shri Rajendra Prasad is a lovable, unassuming but nonetheless strong and influential figure in Indian politics. He

came early under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, for whom his attachment is without reservations. He gave up a flourishing legal practice to join him. He is a much loved leader of the province of Bihar particularly, and is affectionately called 'Bihar Ratna', "the Jewel of Bihar."

409. Lala Lajpat Rai was perhaps the first Indian politician who tried to interest foreign countries in India. For his propaganda in America he suffered greatly at the hands of the British-Indian Government. He was the first prominent Indian political leader who was deported, without trial, for his courageous championing of the peoples' cause against Government. The people gave him the title of "Punjab Kesari", "the Lion of the Punjab." He died in 1928.

410. Mr. Vithalbhai Patel was a very good lawyer and capable politician. He will be particularly remembered as the President of the Central Indian Legislative Assembly, where he set up many new precedents and gave many important rulings. He resigned his office and was jailed for his political work. He died in Europe in 1933.

411. Mr. Vallabhai Patel is the strong man of the Congress today (1940). He knows his mind and will take no denial. For his qualities of leadership and for his remarkable capacity for organisation he has been fitly given non-officially the title of "Sardar", or leader.

412. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is perhaps the subtlest brain in the Congress today. His deep penetrating intellect is the despair of all who dare to argue with him. His knowledge of all sorts of subjects from politics to philosophy is amazingly accurate. He was the Prime Minister of Madras when the Congress was in power there, and is loved and respected by all who know him. He is a suspect too, in many quarters, because of his penetrating and very often logical and intellectually irrefutable arguments. His name has been lovingly abbrevated as 'Raja-ji' ("King") by which he is generally known. The initial 'C' in his name stands

for 'Chakravarti' which curiously enough means 'King of Kings'.

413. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya is a versatile genius. He is at home as a medical doctor, as a business man both in home-spun cloth and insurance, in the politics of Indian States, as well as in history, philosophy and literature. He is the official historian of the Congress, and his command over the English language is most remarkable. I do not know if there is another person in the Congress—where there are so many good speakers—as eloquent and emphatic as Dr. Pattabhi. He is Mahatma Gandhiji's most devoted follower.

414. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is a Bengali by birth and a Madrasi by marriage. Her home is in Hyderabad, the famous capital of the biggest Indian State of that name, and she herself is a distinguished poet and orator whose eloquence has been heard and admired in many lands. She is deeply attached to Mahatma Gandhi, and by her irrepressible humour and ever-ready wit makes light of all the difficulties that come in her way, and she keeps everyone perpetually in cheerful spirits.

415. Prof. J. B. Kripalani gave up his educational career in Bihar in order to join Mahatamaji's first political campaign which was in that very province. He has always been devotedly attached to Mahatmaji, and under his inspiration has organised the production and distribution of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth on an extended scale in north India. He has been for years the general secretary of the Indian National Congress. He served as a professor at the Benares Hindu University and was, for many years, the Principal of the Gujerat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

415a. Hakim Ajmal Khan came from a very distinguished family of hereditary physicians learned in the Yunani, (literally meaning Greek, really perhaps Arabic) system of medicine and was thus called Hakim. He was a widely respected figure in Muslim India, and his coming into active politics greatly surprised those who knew him. He presided over the Ahmedabad Congress in 1921. He died in 1927.

415b. Dr. M. A. Ansari was a distinguished doctor—physician and surgeon—at Delhi and in great demand professionally among the Nawabs and other wealthy folk. He had organised medical missions during the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 and was greatly admired and respected by all. He presided over the Madras Congress in 1927. He died suddenly in 1936 while travelling in a train.

416. Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Muhammad Ali, called the Ali brothers, were remarkable public workers. They were persons of international repute and worked steadfastly for the wellbeing of Muslims the world over. Their great ideal was to bring back Islam to its pristine glory both in its spiritual and its material spheres. They suffered much for their faith, having been interned and imprisoned over and over again. The younger, Muhammad Ali, was a man of great intellect and a vigorous journalist. He died in England in 1932 while attending the Round Table Conference and was buried at Mecca. The elder, Shaukat Ali, was a great cricketer in his younger days and had served Government in the Excise Department. He was elected a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934 and died in ~~that year~~ during a session of the legislature. Both the brothers were very closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi at the time of the Khilafat movement, *i.e.*, the movement for the continued recognition of the Caliphate at Constantinople, to which the British Government were regarded as unfriendly, and which was ultimately abolished by Mustafa Kamal Pasha, the dictator of Turkey after the Great War of 1914-18. Both the brothers later left the Congress, and ~~Muhammad~~ Ali was, towards the end, closely connected with the Muslim League.

417. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is one of the most learned of men, deeply versed in all departments of Muslim theology. He was born at Mecca and educated at Cairo. He is a striking and dignified figure in Indian public life. He is one of the few Muslims who have thrown themselves heart and soul into the cause of Indian nationalism. He is a most

fluent speaker and writer in Urdu. He is the President of the Indian National Congress as I write (1940).

418. 'Gandhi cap' is a boat-shaped white cap made of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. It has come to be named after Mahatma Gandhi because he used to wear it for some time, and though he now goes about bare-headed, it has became the fashion of Congressmen to wear that sort of cap all over the country. It is almost a part of the uniform of members of the Congress.

419. Pandit Ram Narayan Misra is a noted educationist. He has served the education department in the United Provinces, in various ways; as an Inspector of Schools in Government service and as headmaster of various schools. He has been a popular person in whatever society he has moved. He was also one of the founders of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha at Benares (see also note 246) to which in his retirement he is giving most of his time.

420. Mr. B. Shiva Rao was one of the favourites of Mrs. Besant. He belongs to a distinguished family of Karnatak (South India) and is at the present moment one of the most popular of journalists and press correspondents at Delhi, trusted by all. He also was a member of the Round Table Conference in London (1930) when the problem of Indian reforms was being discussed. He is the younger brother of Mr. B. Sanjiva Rao (see note 153).

421. *Pandal* is a temporary structure erected for special occasions for large gatherings. It is not unoften in the form of a huge canopy. The *Pandal* about which I am speaking, *viz*., the one used at the Belgaum Congress of 1924, had the speciality of having been specially made for the Indian National Congress. It was in the form of a huge canopy of *Khadi*, *i.e.*, hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, and used to be carted from place to place for the Congress sessions to be held therein. It did not last very long.

422. See note 202.

423. The ancient Hindu scriptures insistently lay down that whenever two persons want to be very friendly to each other they must avoid three things ; mutual business dealings, that is lending and borrowing of money ; violent discussions ; and visiting each others' spouses in the absence of the other party.

424. Dr. Shiva Kamu orginally non-cooperated from an official medical college. She is now a lady medical officer in Bikaner.

425. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer, K.C.S.I., was a highly influential figure in Madras. He was distinguished both as a lawyer and as a judge, and officiated as Chief Judge of the Madras High Court for many years. He was a deep student of Theosophy and great friend and colleague of Mrs. Besant. He sent back the symbols of his title to Government by registered and insured post on renouncing the same ; and it remained a matter of speculation as to the amount at which he had valued and insured them !

426. Mr. E. S. Montagu was regarded as a great and true friend of India. The political reforms introduced in India in 1919-20 were almost entirely due to him. He was the Secretary of State for India at the time. He visited India in 1917 with some colleagues to study the Indian situation at first hand. He interviewed many leading figures in India. He was angry with Sir Subramanya Iyer (see note 425) for writing a letter to the President of the United States of America on the Indian situation in order to interest the President in the Indian problem. The interview between Montagu and Sir Subramanya was a stormy one.

427. See note 64.

428. The All India Congress Committee is the deliberative body of the Indian National Congress when the latter is not sitting. There is a still smaller body called the Working Committee of the Congress which is really the executive. The All India Congress Committee does the

work of the Subjects Committee also when the Congress is sitting. (See also note 77.)

429. Lord Chelmsford became the Viceroy of India in succession to Lord Hardinge in 1916. He had by no means an easy task. He is particularly remembered as the co-author with Mr. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, of the Reforms of 1919, which are generally known as the 'Montagu-Chelmsford' or even 'Montford' reforms. (See note 426).

430. Rai Bahadur Babu Purnendu Narayan Singh was a well-known and highly esteemed lawyer of Patna. He was a prominent Theosophist and much attached to Mrs. Besant.

431. Mr. W. T. Stead was an outstanding figure in the later nineteenth and early twenteeth century in journalism and public life in England. He was a man of very wide sympathies and the friend of every good person and every good cause. He had very wide intellectual interests also.

432. "The Review of Reviews" was a wonderful monthly magazine, when edited by W. T. Stead. It gave the news of the world in brief and reproduced the world's best cartoons. The articles covered a wide variety of subjects. My father used to subscribe to it regularly and I read it with great interest.

433. Stead's "Books for the Bairns" was a very delightful series for children. In easy and beautiful language, the children could learn almost everything from these books. I must have read over a hundred of them.

434. "Penny Poets" was another useful series of books issued by Mr. W. T. Stead. These gave the best poems of all the greatest poets in the English language in extraordinarily cheap little volumes.

435. The "Titanic" was a huge and luxurious pleasure liner, and was wrecked on her maiden voyage in the Atlantic by an iceberg (1913).

436. I remember a public meeting in the Congress *pandal* in Benares (1905) where speakers, including Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, spoke in favour of the founding of a Hindu University. In 1911, the idea took concrete shape. The requisite legislation was passed by the Central Indian Legislature, then called the Indian Legislative Council, giving the University a legal status in 1915.

437. The highest governing body of the University is called the court, that is supposed to lay down policies and principles for the same.

438. Mrs. Besant herself was the President of the Board of Trustees and she is referring to herself in the letter. As regards her reference to Pandit Sunderlal, see note 337 ; and to Pandit Malaviya, see note 338.

439. My wife's maiden name was " Phul Kumari ", but my father gave her the name of " Anasuya " by which name she was always known. She was the daughter of Babu Govind Prasad, a landholder of Sasaram in Bihar.

439a. Mr. Arthur Digby Besant is the owner of the Theosophical Publishing House, London. For many years he was prominent in the insurance world of London, president of a life insurance society (1906-1933)—almost the same period in which his venerable Mother was President of The Theosophical Society—, he has served on national insurance commissions, and has been President of the Institute of Actuaries. His writings, otherwise mostly on actuarial subjects, include a book on " The Besant Pedigree."

439b. Mrs. Mabel Besant-Scott married Ernest Scott, a journalist, with whom she conducted a Theosophical journal in Australia ; later she worked at Adyar, and for some years, till 1935, held high office in the Co-Masonic Order in England, where she is now living.

440. The *Leader* is a daily paper of Allahabad. It used to be the only Indian daily in the U.P. in the English language in the old days, the European paper being the famous

Pioneer. Since then other papers have come into existence ; but the *Leader* has always been a powerful organ of public opinion and bears the impress of its exceptionally able editor, Mr. C. Y. (now Sir Yajneshwar) Chintamani, a man of very strong likes and dislikes, and there is never any mistaking his opinion on anything. He always knows his mind and expresses it without fear or favour.

441. Mrs. Besant passed away on September 20, 1933. She was born on October 1, 1847.

442. Mr. Damodar Prasad has always been a very popular person He never gets angry whatever may happen, and one can never find him talking ill of anybody. Despite the most serious of domestic bereavements he has always been unruffled. He was ever devoted to Mrs. Besant and joined her work immediately on graduation. He is serving in the Besant School at Rajghat, Benares. (See also note 336).

443. Kashi, or ' shining ', is the old name of the city of Benares, which is still known as such by the people of the land. The name ' Benares ' comes from the principal streams of Varuna and Asi that bound it on two sides. The original Sanskrit name Varanasi, has been transformed in Hindi into ' Benares '.

444. Despite the very strong attitude against Government of the Nehrus, father and son alike, the Government were remarkably considerate to them in every way. They invariably released all the members of the family who were in jail whenever there was any serious illness in the family. When Pandit Motilal Nehru himself was dying, his son, daughters, son-in-law and daughter-in-law were all in jail as political prisoners and all were released to be at his bedside during the last moments. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's wife, Mrs. Kamala Nehru, was seriously ill at this time (1933) and he was released to be with her. Jawaharlal went again into jail early in 1934 and his wife went on to Europe for

treatment. She died there in 1936, when again Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was released so that he could fly to her in time.

445. Mr. Har Prasad Saksena is a self-sacrificing Congress worker at Lucknow. He has had nothing to do with Theosophy or The Theosophical Society. I mention his name to show the effect Mrs. Besant had left on the minds of Congress workers even during the few years that she worked in the field of Indian politics, which impelled even a person like Mr. Saksena, unconnected as he was with any of her work, to move that a meeting in full swing should be adjourned in her honour.

446. The municipalities in India have to carry on their work under very heavy handicaps. They are bound hand and foot and have to take orders from Government at every step. My father as chairman of the Benares municipality had to fight very hard for the vindication of the city's freedom and self-respect.

447. Many of Mrs. Besant's Theosophical lectures and books dealt with life before birth and after death. She seemed to speak with the confidence of personal knowledge on such subjects.

448. Veda-Vyas, the great Rishi, is supposed to have arranged and edited the Vedas, the oldest and most sacred of Hindu scriptures, and is the reputed author of the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, which are in the nature of history, legend, allegory, and contain moral lessons, philosophic speculations, and political wisdom.

449. *Dharma* has many meanings : Religion, duty, piety, right conduct, rites and ceremonies ; and is constantly used in all these senses.

450. Life in India, in the very nature of things, with a foreign Government, is never very happy. All public workers are more or less suspect, even if they work in fields other than political. Strict censorship is maintained on letters, and,

like many others, I too have lost scores of letters in the post. Those I write and those that are written to me are alike unsafe. Mr. Arundale told me the amazing story that when during his internment with Mrs. Besant at Ootacamund in 1917, he telegraphed to a Calcutta firm to send him some 'marmite', a vegetable product used with bread sandwiches, the telegram was stopped. The censors, Mr. Arundale added, evidently mistook 'marmite' to be some form of 'dynamite'.